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ABSTRACT

The theme of this journal issue is the development of lifelong reading habits and interests. The articles address questions of what to read, how to read, and why one should read. Bibliographies are provided, novels and poems are recommended, and teaching strategies and curricula are outlined. In addition, two student essays are offered on the question of censorship. (RI)

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DEVELOPING LIFELONG READERS

Virginia English Bulletin

Volume 31, Number 2

Winter 1981

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Focus: DEVELOPING LIFELONG READERS

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TWO STACKS LATER: Developing Lifelong Readers

Leila Christenbury
Guest Editor

My first memorable reading experience occurred when I was twelve years old and in Mrs. Pendleton's seventh grade class. I had stumbled upon a copy of Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel,* and for five breathless, red-eyed days I lived in the world of Eugene Gant. I read on the bus to and from school, in the cafeteria at lunch, at night under the covers, and—utterly compulsively—during class with the book concealed on my lap. I am, to this day, positive Mrs. Pendleton saw it all, assessed what was happening, and had the graciousness and good sense to leave me alone. For my part, I was enthralled to find on a printed page my hopes, aspirations, and unarticulated fears. The experience was my first significant encounter with literature and, essentially, propelled me into my career as a student of literature and as an English teacher.

The majority of us have experienced identical reading epiphanies and, as adult professionals, continue to be surprised, provoked, and stirred by our reading. Thus a dedication to lifelong reading is indisputably near and dear to English teachers. It is not an exaggeration to state that most of us, as students, were attracted to the profession through our own experiences reading, and most of us, as teachers, would consider ourselves unqualified successes if, in our classrooms, we produced committed readers.

Yet part of the mystery of our business is the sheer uncertainty of our effect upon our students. They are with us only for a year, a semester, or even as briefly as six weeks. The ones who return, years later, to testify to our influence are gratifying but, as we know, the countless others whom we never see again might perhaps bear a different, less flattering, message. As a result, it is difficult to know if in our classrooms we are indeed molding lifelong readers.

Despite the uncertainty, however, we continue as English teachers to encourage students to read and to read ourselves. Through reading we examine our lives, our beliefs, and the mystery of existence. We find some of our experience confirmed, some of it disputed and challenged. Yet reading itself is a quintessentially human act and is, for many of us, the most continually rewarding activity of our lives.

So a commitment to lifelong reading is, most appropriately, the theme of this winter's *Virginia English Bulletin.* With this issue, the *Bulletin* celebrates more than thirty years of continuous publication, and the focus on transforming students who read because it is assigned to stu-

An assistant professor of English at James Madison University, Dr. Leila Christenbury has published articles in English Journal, The Alan Review *and* English Education.

dents who read because they love to could have as easily appeared in the 1950's as it does in the 1980's.

In these pages, questions of what to read, how to read, and why one should read, are addressed perceptively, incisively, and even humorously. Bibliographies are provided, novels and poems recommended, and strategies and curricula outlined. In addition, two student essays address the question of censorship, an issue, unfortunately, that never seems to be far removed from the subject of reading.

As guest editor, with the patient guidance of Alan McLeod, I have thoroughly enjoyed preparing this issue, and I extend to you my fondest wish: Happy Reading.

On a less upbeat note, Mark Gulesian's article on professional licensing regulations is worth serious attention: the proposed changes in teacher certification will affect all of us, and it is not clear that those effects will be positive ones. As English teachers and VATE members, it behooves us to take a stand on this crucial issue.

You're Reading *That* Book?

DONALD R. GALLO

I once made the mistake of starting to read Robb White's *Deathwatch* in the early evening. Unable to put it down, I sped through each heart-thumping page until it was over. By that time it was after midnight, everyone in my family was asleep, and I didn't have any weird friends with whom I felt comfortable enough to phone at that hour. When I finish a book, especially an exciting one like *Deathwatch*, or a thought-provoking one like Robert Cormier's *I Am the Cheese*, or Judith Guest's *Ordinary People*, I want to talk about it with someone, sometimes with *everyone!* That's one of the things I like about being a teacher: I always have a receptive audience to talk with about what I've read.

Not all English teachers feel that way. "Do your teachers read? Do they read books that you might like to read?" Each semester, I invite half a dozen or more students from local middle schools and junior and senior high schools to talk with my college class studying literature for young adults. Most students are unable to answer those questions. They don't know if their teachers read, because they have never seen them with a book in their hand, other than the required texts for that course. "Do teachers ever talk with you about books they've read?" Almost never. In the past dozen years of my asking those questions of secondary school students, I don't think more than ten percent of them have ever had a teacher who talked informally about books she or he had read. These have not been unusual students; they've been all kinds of students—good students, poor students, mediocre students, students in honors classes, students in remedial classes, students from wealthy suburban schools, from rural schools, from innercity schools, from public and parochial and independent schools.

Why don't teachers talk with kids about books they have read? Probably for several reasons:

- I'm too busy during the school year to read anything but required books, so how can I be expected to talk about other books?
- What I read is too sophisticated for the kinds of kids I teach, so there's not much sense in talking about it with them.
- I never thought about doing it before now.

"All of the above" is probably the best response.

We can all make time to read for ourselves, sporadically if not regularly, if we really want to. I read in spurts, sometimes reading nothing for weeks, then reading voraciously on long weekends and during school

Dr. Donald Gallo is a professor of English at Central Connecticut State University. He is the former editor of Connecticut English Journal *and has published extensively on behalf of the teaching of English.*

vacations, though I also usually read when I don't want to do work that's more demanding but less enjoyable. Some teachers set aside a regular reading time for themselves. A math teacher in the first school I ever taught in got up half an hour before anyone else in her family so that, in the early morning quiet, she could read for her own pleasure or information, every day. I know too many teachers who almost never read. We can't expect to turn kids on to reading if we don't read.

Certainly we should read what interests and pleasures us, adult fare that may be too sophisticated or otherwise unsuitable for students we teach. But that doesn't mean we should neglect the kinds of books which kids like to read. I don't mean comics, or war adventures, or flimsy romances necessarily. But I think a junior high school or middle school teacher does students a disservice by not having read S. E. Hinton (e.g., *The Outsiders*), or Harry Mazer (e.g., *Snowbound*), or Paul Zindel (e.g., *The Pigman*); or senior high school teachers by not having read books like Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*, Robin Brancato's *Winning*, or certainly the notorious Judy Blume's *Forever*. Those books have been around for some time now, so your students are probably far ahead of you if you've not read them. If you intend to be a little more current, you might try Hinton's *Tex*, Mazer's *The Last Mission*, Zindel's *The Pigman's Legacy* or his earlier hilarious *The Undertaker's Gone Bananas*, and Cormier's *After the First Death*. If you have ben skeptical about reading any of those books or authors before, you need not be. You'll probably be surprised at the quality of them, if you'll just give them a chance. And, if you really want to get into what high school students will like (but which you might not be able to teach because of their controversial content), get hold of *Endless Love* by Scott Spencer, *The Quartzsite Trip* by William Hogan, or *Vision Quest* by Terry Davis. (All of those are available in paperback.)

Of course, bring your book to class. Carry it around with you. Let students see that you read. One of the advantages of a period of silent reading in schools, or at least in your classroom, is that you can read when your students do. You can see what they're interested in reading, and they can do the same with you.

One of my graduate students (in fact this has happened to several students in the past) who took my course in literature for adolescents last spring began to take her required reading books for my class to her classroom, in case she found a spare moment to read a few pages. Her usually apathetic students began to notice, and one day, spying a copy of *Forever* on the teacher's desk, a ninth grader exclaimed: "You're reading *that* book?"

The class was delighted. The teacher was excited. And from then on the atmosphere in that group changed dramatically. That teacher, although she was generally competent and pleasant and effective, had never thought about talking informally about books or personal reading with her students. She began to talk about other books she had read,

and the students talked about books they had read. And before long they were exchanging books with each other. That one exposure to her personal reading, and her willingness to talk about it openly with students, opened a door that got her students reading more and talking more about books—that continued throughout the semester.

Good reading habits need encouraging. We can all help by setting an example, by reading (by reading especially what kids are interested in), and by talking with students about what we've read.

The Moral Imperative of *The Chocolate War*

MYRA KIBLER

Few contemporary novels for young readers have evoked such strong responses from teachers, librarians, and critics as Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*. It is widely acknowledged to be a well-crafted novel, and Kenneth Donelson and Alleen Nilsen have chosen it as "an example of the best of modern realism for young adults" (*Literature for Today's Young Adults*, Scott Foresman, 1980). In talking about *The Chocolate War* with individual teachers and groups of teachers and librarians, however, I have heard strong negative responses. Some reject the book simply because it contains physical and psychological violence, going so far as to say that they would not have it in their classrooms. Those who, as a matter of taste, avoid ugliness will not want to read *The Chocolate War*, nor will they want to watch such films as "The Holocaust" or "Playing for Time." In fact such people may feel all the more uncomfortable reading the novel because their avoidance of evil is Cormier's target. Others dislike the fact that suffering leads to no redemption, growth, or understanding.

So few books written for young people can stand up to the criteria that Donelson and Nilsen used in judging *The Chocolate War* as the best of its kind that it would be a considerable loss should that novel be neglected.

The Chocolate War examines evil in a realistic mode. Ugliness is an appropriate vehicle to show the manifestations of evil. A reader should not expect a placid story, nor should a reader expect that all suffering produces positive results. Although suffering has been portrayed in adolescent literature most often as producing growth or understanding, it distorts Cormier's view of reality to discount the existence of nonproductive suffering. For this reason accusations that Cormier stacks the plot and then pulls the rug out are serious objections. However, if we look carefully at the nature of evil in *The Chocolate War*, we see

Myra Kibler teaches English at Clemson University in South Carolina.

that Jerry Renault, despite his heroic effort, succumbs to temptation and commits an error which leads to his defeat. In the morality defined by the novel, what happens is right, however unpleasant it may be.

In fairy tales, ballads, romances, and the modern equivalent, cowboy stories, evil usually has an identifying mark: a cloven hoof, some physical grotesqueness, or at least a black hat. But in Cormier's fictional world, evil is indistinguishable from good It seduces, working not by confrontation, but by subversion. It finds a weakness in a person and through that weakness destroys individuality. The good becomes inverted to evil, but the appearance is the same, for good and evil are mirror images of one another. In a different genre, Archie would have a cloven-hoof, but in *The Chocolate War*, he is the intelligent leader of The Vigils who dislikes violence and who disguises his malevolence as playful pranks. He is inscrutable, even to his cohorts. Obie and Emile Janza never know when Archie is acting.

Archie and The Vigils exist at Trinity School, not because the school supports evil, but because The Vigils keep peace. While other schools experience demonstrations and protests, Trinity, by outward appearance, remains peaceful. The administration yields its authority to The Vigils and thereby itself becomes evil for the purpose of keeping peace. Likewise Archie coerces students into doing his assignments. Most people, he has learned, will choose peace at a price; "nobody want[s] a showdown." But in choosing peace for a price, they, like the administration, unintentionally join the ranks of evil.

The mirroring or inverting quality of evil is symbolized by the use of language in the book. When Archie repeatedly says "that's beautiful" of something that is ugly, not only does he speak as youngsters commonly do, but the irony also functions thematically. When a character uses *Jesus Christ* as an expletive, he typifies the way in which evil is an inversion of good just as Archie, The Vigils, and Brother Leon are a demonic version of the holy trinity for which the school was named.

Nowhere is the nature of evil more dramatically presented than in Brother Leon's Nazi lesson. Brother Leon knows how to control and manipulate the classroom as Archie does the activities of The Vigils: he demonstrates how evil works by playing the role of the provocateur; then he reverses roles and becomes the instructor explaining evil and criticizing those who participate in it. This role-playing throws the reader off balance, but the confusion is functional. For his purpose Leon chooses a shy, studious boy named Bailey and tortures him, physically and psychologically, before the class. He hits him in the face with his pointer, a painful but ambiguous stroke. Since it appears accidental and Leon mutters a perfunctory apology, the class does not know how to respond. Then Leon accuses Bailey of cheating. While he manipulates Bailey into a choice between falsely admitting that he cheated or claiming to be perfect like God, he also manipulates the response of the class—when Leon's manner suggests laughter, they laugh. Even Jerry Renault finds

himself drawn into the conspiracy and, as he laughs along, wonders, "Hey, what's going on here." Finally, when the torment has escalated to unbearable levels, an anonymous voice in the back of the room revolts and says, "Aw, let the kid alone." But no one is willing to risk identification with the voice of responsible decency, even though everyone agreed with it. The desire to avoid risk, to stay out of the spotlight, dominates. Brother Leon, his control demonstrated by his ability to hold the students past the bell with just a word, then turns the table. He exonerates Bailey by calling him the bravest of them all and dubs the rest fools and idiots. He exposes them for going along and places responsibility on each individual: "you . . . allowed it to happen, allowed me to proceed. You turned this classroom into Nazi Germany for a few moments." Of the anonymous protester he says, "A feeble protest, too little and too late." Changing to a tone which is paternal and tender, he praises Bailey for being true to himself.

Brother Leon's lesson teaches the moral of the novel. What he says rings true: one should be "true" to oneself. Only when people compromise their integrity for the sake of anonymity can evil subvert good. Brian Cochran wants nothing to do with being treasurer of the chocolate sale but is afraid to focus Leon's attention on himself by refusing. Nor does he speak up when The Vigils credit the wrong people with sales. Even Goober, who knows The Vigils are evil and who, in sympathy with Jerry, stops selling chocolates, fails to speak out when he is falsely credited with having sold his quota. The person who abnegates individual responsibility permits evil to work and, by extension, participates in it. By having this lesson come from Brother Leon, Cormier demonstrates the resemblance between good and evil. As long as we separate good and evil in our minds, we cannot see what Cormier is saying. We must be able to see that Leon the moral teacher and Leon the destructive manipulator look alike—that the devil does not have a cloven hoof.

People who compromise their integrity for the sake of what they see as personal survival forfeit their own identity in the process. Brian Cochran and others who compromise in an effort to survive lose their individuality and become the mob which Archie manipulates. No longer able to make their own decisions, they become Archie's puppets. Jerry Renault alone stands for personal integrity. After accepting The Vigil's assignment to refuse to sell chocolates for ten days, he persists in his refusal beyond the assigned time. In acting independently Jerry asserts his identity: "I'm Jerry Renault and I'm not going to sell chocolates." This independence threatens the structure of Trinity. Its effect is described in cosmic terms: "Cities fell. Earth opened. Plants tilted. Stars plummeted," recalling the question on the poster in Jerry's locker, "Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?"

Had Jerry persisted in his stand, not only would he have survived personally, in the sense of remaining Jerry Renault who would not sell

chocolates, but he would have broken the hold of The Vigils on Trinity. He would have proved that a freshman could stand up against Arcnie. Archie has no power over Jerry so long as he holds out, so long as he remains true to himself. Physical punishment and ostracism fail to destroy Jerry, for he possesses a tremendous capacity for punishment as he demonstrated on the football field. Although Arcnie manipulates the students to make the sale a success, he cannot force Jerry to sell chocolates. However, Jerry betrays himself, and in so doing, he participates in the chocolate sale and in the whole evil debacle.

The narration sets up Jerry's fall early in the novel when, during football practice, the coach shouts, "For Christ's sake," and sprays Jerry's cheek with spit. At that point Jerry forms an inner response: "Hey, coach, you spit on me. Stop spitting coach." But aloud Jerry belies this truth when he says, "I'm all right, coach." We are told, "he was a coward about stuff like that, thinking one thing and saying another—he had been Peter a thousand times and a thousand cocks had crowed in his lifetime." The denial of his true thoughts foreshadows the more important denial in the crucial decision to fight Emile Janza: Jerry "didn't want to fight for the same reason he wasn't selling chocolates—he wanted to make his own decisions, do his own thing." Once he accepts the challenge to fight, he denies his own integirty and plays into Archie's hands. Unknown to Jerry, Archie has arranged the fight as a way of selling Jerry's quota of chocolates. That he has given up making his own decisions is reflected in the rules of the fight: each blow is authorized and directed by a ticket holder in the audience. As he realizes what he has done, "[a] new sickness invaded Jerry, the sickness of knowing what he had become, another animal, another beast, another violent person in a violent world, inflicting damage, not disturbing the universe but damaging it." Brother Jacques intervenes to avert a catastrophe, but his intervention, like the anonymous voice in Brother Leon's classroom, is "too little and too late."

Continued on p. 73

Book Control in the Classroom

PATRICK CLEMENTS

Book control in the classroom is an American tradition. Ever since the founding of our first schools, concerned parents and religious leaders have been pondering books deemed obscene or otherwise unfit, often with good reason. Unfortunately, their worry has not always been clearly justifiable. Even today, such as classics as *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Huckleberry Finn* are attacked—now more often than before. Book banning in America is on the rise.

Academic freedom cases have sprung up from Vermont to California. One case is now in the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals concerning a 1977-78 incident in Warsaw, Ind. By the time the Warsaw school board was finished, it had (through illegal action) banned a liberal textbook, *Values Clarification,* and had eliminated elective literature courses.

Several books used in a "Women in Literature" class were removed, and emotions erupted when the Senior Citizens' Club supportively put the torch to 40 copies of the textbook in a parking lot display hauntingly similar to outbursts in Nazi Germany 45 years ago.

Three teachers (two were liberal educators) were dismissed with little explanation, and a student newspaper that dared protest was shut down. A minority, fundamentalist organization was born and dedicated itself to purging "filthy, vulgar material from the classroom." The group euphemistically called itself "People Who Care."

Book banning is most often initiated because the books are objectionable to the moral, political, racial, or religious sensitivities of a group of people. In Warsaw, morality, or the lack of such, was the heart of the original problem as seen by some parents and the senior citizens group.

Sometimes, this desire for change is questionable and dangerous. Recently, the powerful Moral Majority's North Carolina chapter, organized under the Rev. Lamarr Mooneyham of Durham, announced that it is compiling a list of "objectionable" books that it will recommend concerned parents examine; Virginia's chapter may soon follow suit.

The list has not yet been published; however, some science books, especially biology and astronomy texts, have been placed on it because they do not include the Biblical story of the creation of man and of the earth.

To the fundamentalists, these books, by not mentioning the Biblical creation, are intolerable because they seem to dictate atheism. However,

When this article was written, Patrick Clements was a senior at Deep Creek High School, Chesapeake, and a student of former VATE president Tom Callahan.

teaching evolution does not instill atheism; evolution has merely been exploited by atheists as an anchor for their philosophy.

To the working biologist, Darwin's theory is so well supported that, until power politics entered the issue recently, few biology books included the creation story; likewise, few modern astronomy books include the fundamental version of *Genesis* or its many interpretations because they clash with what is known by man and what can be demonstrated by science. The creationists' scientific arguments against evolution often ignore selected facts, distort grains of truth, and use emotions to debate science.

It is little wonder that censorship has begun to rock the science classroom; many Americans, notably some of the firmest creationists, are as ill-prepared to deal with science and the theory of evolution as the voter who votes according to feelings based on a campaign commercial.

I have not written this merely to criticize the Moral Majority; after all, these people have expressed concern and are trying to play a part in the education of their chidren. Neither is the main thrust of the organization's patriotic philosophy generally objectionable. And, as Mr. Mooneyham said, the list only recommends books which, in his group's opinion, parents should examine.

On the surface, then, the Moral Majority and the discussion of book censorship might appear to pose no inherent danger. But a great amount of power is being wielded by a well-organized, religious front: Americans cannot afford to sit back. Damage to the school library alone will be hard to repair, much less other facets of education which could be affected by such power.

What might be the worst result of all this? Two examples come to mind. These books, *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984* are not, in themselves, wholly American, uncontroversial books.

But in both, suppression of free inquiry is a function of the government; in both, such suppression is heartily supported by the majority of the people. Will Americans, like the people of the city of *Fahrenheit 451,* wipe out the controversial by burning books? Will we, by doing so, create a mind-stunting orthodoxy? In *1984* the government has taken the movement to the point of reprinting all printed material to reflect the worship of a man-made deity, Big Brother.

Are we to reprint science books until they reflect only static religious views and contain no theories that man can test, no ideas that evolve? Again, I only cite the worst possibilities, but the new shield of American pride and patriotism covers many crusaders. Some of these crusaders represent a true danger to freedom of inquiry in America.

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Bibliotherapy: Methods and Materials

INEZ L. RAMSEY

Bibliotherapy, as practiced in educational settings, speaks in the broad sense to the use of reading, listening, or viewing experiences to foster the development of emotional growth and health in young people. Using literature as a springboard, we, as educators and concerned adults, can provide children with a healthy emotional outlet by giving them opportunities to discuss special challenges and problems. Based upon the belief that books and other media have the potential to affect the attitudes, habits, and skills of normal children in a positive manner, bibliotherapy can provide children with new insights into problems associated with family situations, coping with feelings, peer relations, physical handicaps, economic and social problems, and social and cultural differences.

In order for bibliotherapy to be effective, one needs to know the child as a person, the nature of the problem, the library media resources available, and the potential for therapy. The following general guidelines may be helpful in planning the bibliotherapeutic process.

1. *Analyze the problem.* School records, home visits, consultation with other faculty, and informal talks with the student and peers may provide insight into the child's needs. If problems seem deep-seated ones, seek counseling advice from school guidance personnel before any action is taken.

2. *Identify appropriate literature related to the problem.* Content need not be problem specific. For example, an overweight child with a poor self-concept may respond to literature featuring an overweight child as an accepted part of a group, although not the central character in the story. Factors such as the child's age, sex, ability levels, interests, and socioeconomic background should be considered in selection. The criteria for good literature should be applied in evaluating materials. Books, films, records, and other forms of media are appropriate bibliotherapeutic tools.

3. *Introduce the child to the selected materials.* Prompting techniques such as providing booklists, displays, or book talks may be useful in encouraging the child to select recommended materials.

4. *Provide an opportunity for the child to discuss the work with you.* Encourage the child to talk about the selection. This requires that you be familiar with the content of recommended materials. In talking with the child, place emphasis on the child's reaction, not your own. If questions are necessary to stimulate discussion, make them open-ended ones, designed to probe the child's reaction.

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5. *Repeat the process if the child expresses interest.* Keep a record of materials used, highlights of the discussion, child's interests, and other pertinent data for later use.

This outline can be used with individuals, classes, or small groups to explore developmental problems common to the children. Role playing and dramatization may extend group experiences.

Depending upon needs, choose reading from a wide assortment of genres, including traditional literature, contemporary fiction, poetry, biography, plays, or nonfiction works in a variety of formats. Many specialized bibliographies aid in the location and selection of suitable materials related to psychological, behavioral, or developmental themes.

The Bookfinder describes and categorizes over one thousand current juvenile books according to more than 450 psychological, behavioral, and developmental topics of concern to children and adolescents. Suggested grade levels are included. A superb index makes this work a "must." *Books to Help Children Cope With Separation and Loss* (Bernstein, 1977) provides critical annotations of children's books which deal with topics of separation and loss through death, divorce, desertion, war, and moving to a new neighborhood. A selected reading list for adults is also included.

Reading Ladders for Human Relations divides books into reading ladders on such topics as growing into self, appreciating different cultures, coping in a changing world, and living with others. Suggested grade levels are included, and the introductory matter provides an excellent structure for presenting books to children as a bibliotherapeutic tool. *Introducing More Books* (Spirt, 1978) organizes books for the middle grades on the themes of getting along in the family, making friends, developing values, and understanding physical, emotional, and social problems.

Bibliographies of materials to meet the needs and interests of children of varying racial and cultural groups may also be useful. Although some titles are out of print, *Building Ethnic Collections* (Wynar and Buttlar, 1977) provides an annotated multimedia bibliography on most ethnic groups in the United States. *Words Like Freedom* (California Association of School Librarians, 1976) includes selected works on Asian, Black, Mexican, and Native Americans. *Multi-Ethnic Books for Children* (ERIC) reviews books for preschool and adolescent audiences under the headings of American Indians, Eskimos, Appalachia and Southern Mountains, Afro-Americans, Hawaii and the Philippines, Latin Americans, Asians, and Jewish and European derivations.

Bibliographies of materials to meet the needs and interests of special children include *Notes from a Different Drummer* (Baskin and Harris, 1977) which offers a comprehensive guide to juvenile fiction depicting handicapped characters written between the years 1940 and 1975. Suggested grade levels and a subject index by handicapping condition are provided. *Books for the Retarded Reader* (Richardson, 1977) reviews

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Young Children, Books, and Times of Stress

BRENDA E. VOGEL

Young children are certainly not immune to stress. Stressful situations can occur in all facets of their lives and for a variety of reasons. In a recent survey of primary (K-3) teachers that enumerated sources of stress in young children, Galen and Johns (*School Library Journal*, November, 1979) found that 80 percent of the respondents in their study included coping with competition, divorce or change in family status, failure, peer group pressure, one's strengths and weaknesses, and alienation and rejection as the problems most prevalent in the primary grades. This list can be greatly expanded by a cursory overview of children's literature texts. These volumes suggest that the emotional and developmental problems of young children originate from diverse etiologies: material security and poverty; physical safety, illness and pain; emotional security (especially concerning siblings and divorce); competence and achievement; belonging; acceptance of uniqueness (e.g., one's cultural background, handicaps and differences); "firsts" (the first day of school, a hospital visit); mental disabilities and illness; drugs and alcohol; aging and death.

One very practical and potentially significant way of helping young children deal with these stressful situations is through books. Cianciolo (*Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 1965) believes that the coping behavior of children is greatly affected by fiction. By vicariously participating with experiences similar to their own, children gain new insights into their problems and often find solutions. Also, a catharsis occurs simply by knowing they are not alone and that others confront quite similar problems. Children's literature merely offers suggestions for solving a particular problem, but the experience is reversible, and ultimately the child must decide if the actions of the characters are acceptable and practicable.

The term most frequently applied to connecting children and books for the purpose of dealing with problems is bibliotherapy. Galen and Johns define this term simply as "an interaction between a reader and a book which helps the reader solve problems and develop effectively" (p. 25). Rongione (*Catholic Library World*, 1972) enumerates the goals of bibliotherapy as follows: (1) to facilitate constructive and positive thinking; (2) to encourage people to verbalize their problems; (3) to analyze attitudes and acceptable modes of behavior; (4) to demonstrate that there are many solutions to a single problem; (5) to adjust to the problem in order to reduce conflict; and (6) to compare an individual's problems with the problems of others. The use of the term bibliotherapy, then, need not imply that teachers, parents, librarians and others working

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with young children must be skilled therapists. They should simply be sensitive to the effects of reading on children and aware that literature can aid children in coping with their problems.

The following books, published since 1970, focus on three stressful situations: death, divorce and single parent families, and handicapping conditions. The items included in the bibliographies are suggested for children eight years old and younger, and the topics were selected for appeal and utility.

Death

Abbott, THE OLD DOG, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1972 (father gives boy a new puppy as substitute for old dog that dies).

Aliki, THE TWO OF THEM, Greenwillow, 1979 (a granddaughter remembers her grandfather).

Bartoli, NONNA, Harvey House, 1975 (grandmother's funeral; mourning described; life resumes with happy thoughts of both grandparents).

Carrick and Carrick, THE ACCIDENT, Seabury, 1976 (Christopher has problems when his dog, Bodger, is killed by a truck).

....., THE FOUNDLING, Seabury, 1977 (Christopher tries to be faithful to Bodger's memory but eventually adopts a stray puppy).

Coutant, FIRST SNOW, Knopf, 1974 (Vietnamese grandmother explains cyclical nature of life).

de Paola, NANA UPSTAIRS AND NANA DOWNSTAIRS, Putnam's, 1973 (great-grandmother and grandmother die; falling stars are goodbye kisses; pat version of life & death).

Dobrin, SCAT, Four Winds Press, 1971 (an 8 year old plays harmonica at his grandmother's grave to say goodbye).

Fassler, MY GRANDPA DIED TODAY, Behavioral Publications, 1971 (Freudian orientation; boy knows grandfather would be happy watching him play ball).

Kantrowitz, WHEN VIOLET DIED, Parent's Magazine Press, 1973 (children hold funeral for bird; living things do not last forever).

Lee, THE MAGIC MOTH, Seabury Press, 1972 (Mark-O preserves sister's memory ir the symbol of a moth).

LeShan, LEARNING TO SAY GOODBYE, Macmillan, 1976 (loss of a parent treated).

Miles, ANNIE AND THE OLD ONE, Little, Brown, 1971 (girl attempts to prevent grandmother's death; eventually accepts death as part of life).

Shecter, ACROSS THE MEADOW, Doubleday, 1973 (death euphemistically portrayed as a vacation).

Smith, A TASTE OF BLACKBERRIES, Crowell, 1973 (Jamie dies from bee sting and friend offers himself to Jamie's mother as substitute son).

Stein, ABOUT DYING, Walker, 1974 (resource for adults and children; death of bird and grandfather depicted; stresses pleasant memories).

Viorst, THE TENTH GOOD THING ABOUT BARNEY, Antheneum, 1971 (pet cat dies; realizes the contribution to the cycle of life).

Vogel, MY TWIN SISTER ERIKA, Harper, 1976 (set in Germany; portrays death of a twin).

Young, WHEN THE WHALE CAME TO MY TOWN, Knopf, 1974 (a whale washes ashore to die).

Zindel, I LOVE MY MOTHER, Harper and Row, 1975 (presumably father is dead; sentimental portrayal of boy and mother missing him).

Zolotow, MY GRANDSON LEW, Harper and Row, 1974 (death of a grandfather through positive reflections.

Divorce and Single Parent Families

Adams, MUSHY EGGS, Putnam's, 1973 (a family managing well after divorce; mother is computer operator).

Baldwin, JENNY'S REVENGE, Scholastic, 1974 (mother works; Jenny learns to cope with situation and her sitter, Mrs. Cramie).

Clifton, SOME OF THE DAYS OF EVERETT ANDERSON, Holt, 1970 (typical child who misses father).

Eickler, MARTIN'S FATHER, Lollipop Power, 1971 (single parent is a male).

Kindred, LUCKY WILMA, Dial Press, 1973 (Wilma spends Saturday with father; divorce not a miserable situation).

Lexau, EMILY AND THE KLUNKY BABY AND THE NEXT DOOR DOG, Dial Press, 1972 (girl resents younger brother; mad with mother; attempts to run away to father's house).

....., ME DAY, Dial Press, 1971 (father visits Rafer as a birthday surprise).

Perry and Lynch, MOMMY AND DADDY ARE DIVORCED, Dial, 1978 (two young boys live with mother and see father periodically).

Rogers, MORRIS AND HIS BRAVE LION, McGraw-Hill, 1975 (parents divorced; 5 year old Morris must be strong like his stuffed lion).

Schick, CITY IN THE WINTER, MacMillan, 1970 (mother works; father absent; family coping well).

Stanek, I WON'T GO WITHOUT A FATHER, Albert Whitman, 1972 (no father, male figures are grandfather and uncle; Steve learns to accept situation).

Surowiecki, JOSHUA'S DAY, Lollipop Power, 1972 (Joshua goes to day-care; mother works; both coping well).

Van Leeuwen, TOO HOT FOR ICE CREAM, Dial, 1974 (two girls go to beach with father; car trouble but all ends well).

Zindel, I LOVE MY MOTHER, Harper and Row, 1975 (boy deeply loves mother but misses father).

Zolotow, A FATHER LIKE THAT, Harper and Row, 1971 (a boy's dream of an ideal father).

Handicapping Conditions

Brightman, LIKE ME, Little Brown, 1976 (retarded child who wants to be accepted; photo story).

Charlip and Miller, HANDTALK: AN ABC OF FINGER SPELLING AND SIGN LANGUAGE, Parent's, 1974 (introduces signing and finger spelling to primary age children).

Fanshawe, RACHEL, Bradbury Press, 1977 (a young girl confined to but unrestricted by a wheelchair).

Fassler, HOWIE HELPS HIMSELF, Albert Whitman and Co., 1975 (cerebral palsy; physical limitations only).

....., THE BOY WITH A PROBLEM, Human Sciences Press, 1971 (withdrawn boy; depressed behavior; needs a good listener).

Heide, SOUND OF SUNSHINE, SOUND OF RAIN, Parent's Magazine Press, 1970 (blind boy).

Keats, APT. 3, Macmillan, 1971 (two young boys made friends with a blind harmonica player).

Klein, THE BLUE ROSE, Lawrence Hill, 1974 (mentally retarded girl; attitudes toward her; photo story).

Kraus, LEO THE LATE BLOOMER, Dutton, 1973 (Leo, a slow learner, catches up).

Lasker, HE'S MY BROTHER, Albert Whtitman & Co., 1974 (slow learner through eyes of older brother).
Levine, LISA AND HER SOUNDLESS WORLD, Human Sciences Press, 1974 (impaired hearing).
Litchfield, A BUTTON IN HER EAR, Concept Books, 1976 (young girl gets hearing aid).
Mack, TRACY, Children's Press, 1976 (cerebral palsy child who gets around).
Peter, CLAIRE AND EMMA, John Day, 1976 (two deaf and active English girls; photos).
Peterson, I HAVE A SISTER, MY SISTER IS DEAF, Harper and Row, 1977 (what a deaf child can and cannot do).
Sobol, MY BROTHER STEVEN IS RETARDED, Macmillan, 1977 (11 year old girl and her feelings about her mentally retarded brother; photos).
Stein, ABOUT HANDICAPS, Walker & Co., 1974 (boy with cerebral palsy).
White, WALTER IN LOVE, Lothrop, 1973 (love between Walter and Tita overcomes dyslexia).
Williams, STUPID MARCO, Parents, 1970 (not-so-bright Marco rescues bright Sylvia from boredom).
Wolf, ANNA'S SILENT WORLD, Lippincott, 1977 (deaf 6 year old functions in regular school situation; photos).
....., DON'T FEEL SORRY FOR PAUL, Lippincott, 1974 (7 year old with prosthetic arm and legs; nonfiction; photos).
Wolff, MOM! I NEED GLASSES, Lion Press, 1970 (Susan's myopia is refracted; technical content).

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It is important to see that the forces of evil do not simply overpower Jerry. He took a stand requiring great courage. No one forced Jerry to fight; he made the decision. Neither Archie nor the system defeated Jerry; he fell victim to a human flaw. He was not true to himself. Archie set the trap, but Jerry walked into it. In doing so he became one of Archie's puppets. His defeat was not arbitrary but was in accordance with the moral terms of the novel. Of course readers do not approve Jerry's brutal beating; indeed we suffer vicariously with him. But because Cormier has provided the reader a larger perspective than Jerry Renault had, we can understand why he fails. This knowledge gives us a healthy distance from Jerry. *The Chocolate War* stirs us, makes us feel. But unlike Jerry, we depart intact, with the knowledge that to combat evil, we must retain personal integrity.

Readers will debate the reality of Cormier's fictional world. I have fought my own chocolate wars, and I find this book true to what I know. Others will have to judge it by their experience. The book deserves such scrutiny. But it does not deserve the charge of dishonest manipulation. Rather than warping adolescent psyches, it is more likely to develop social consciousness and moral responsibility, for it presents morality in a form relevant to the contemporary world. And while such a claim recommends the book, it also insures that it will stir controversy.

Great English Teaching Ideas: Reading Can Be Fun

SHARON HARRIS, *Guest Editor*

Reading is a skill that has to be developed and nurtured. It doesn't happen overnight and is often a painful experience for many students. The pleasure obtained from reading is boundless, and all students deserve the chance to discover this for themselves. Yet, year after year teachers are faced with students who are masters at avoiding what they don't like to do—read. All of us know, however, that helping students develop an interest in reading is one of the most beneficial things that a teacher can do. It will enable students to get more out of school, and out of adult life, than any other single skill or habit that we can encourage. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula or easy answer to tell us how to obtain this worthy goal.

It doesn't take a specialized degree or courses in remedial reading to start students reading. Motivation to read is in the hands of individual teachers, and an enthusiastic teacher has a good chance of helping students learn to enjoy reading. The more they enjoy reading, the more they will read. The more they read, the better their skills will become. The better their skills become, the more they enjoy reading, the more they enjoy reading, the more they will read, and so the cycle continues. Therefore, the first priority is to get students to read, and then gradually work on *what* they read.

This column contains ideas on how to develop reading enjoyment in kids who can read but never particularly liked to. If we can encourage our students to read, then we have had a hand in helping to make them into lifelong readers—a worthy goal by anyone's standards.

READING — motivation

Most students who do not read well need motivation stronger than grades or mere pleasure to read. One way of accomplishing this task is to offer Store Points. Students are given points for reading class, and at the end of the week the accumulated points can be used to purchase items from the classroom store. The store items can be anything the teacher chooses: posters, books, puzzles, or small games. The excitement of the purchase with points earned becomes important to the students, and many non-readers start participating.

Lee Davis, Orange County

Sharon Harris is the English supervisor of Albemarle County Schools and has served on the Executive Board of VATE.

READING motivation

The Bonus Question of the Week (or BQW) encourages students to view the library as a boundless source of information. On Monday morning write a question on the board. The question should relate to the unit currently under study and require a visit to the library to peruse reference materials. The first student to bring the correct answer written on a slip of paper with the source noted receives an extra credit point. The correct answer and the winner's name is then posted on the board until the following week. To give all classes a chance to see the question, accept no answers before Tuesday morning. Students must seek the answer on their own time—not during a class period. Only accept answers submitted by individuals—not groups. After several students develop into avid BQW fans, you may have to limit the number of times a student can receive bonus points during a given grading period.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1) What is the popular rock group whose name is a *palindrome*?
2) In the regional dialect of Rhode Island, what do the terms "cabinet" and "bubbler" mean?
3) What famous poet was drowned in the Gulf of Spezia?
4) List 10 words commonly used in our language today that were coined by Shakespeare.

Susan Hull, Albemarle County

READING motivation

How about a R.A.T. (Reading All Together) time in your classroom or school? Have a signal at a certain time or day every week that tells everyone it is time to read. Be creative about the signal (play "Three Blind Mice" on a xylophone, ring a bell, play a symphony record) and use it to start and end the reading time. *Everyone* in the class or school must stop whatever he is doing and read for five to ten minutes (or the desired amount of time) when the signal sounds. This activity impresses students. They enjoy seeing everyone (students, teachers, principal, custodians, etc.) show appreciation, enjoyment, and respect for READING! Many students will read who have never shown an interest before. They will actually start looking forward to and asking about R.A.T. time.

Debbie Koch, Fluvanna County

READING survival

Many students who would never consider reading a book will read key phrases on labels or packages in grocery stores. Teachers can take advantage of this to start students reading. The teacher locates a catchy phrase, cooking instructions, or interesting content from some item that can be purchased in the grocery store and gives it to the students. The first student to locate the phrase and give the teacher the name of the product it was taken from gets bonus points added on to a quiz. This type of activity can then be expanded to newspaper articles, advertisements, short stories, poems, etc.

Stephen Keith, Prince Edward County

READING understanding/enjoyment

When students read an assignment, they often fail to enjoy what they are reading or fail to read for understanding. The moving-game quiz can help overcome these problems.

After students have read an assigned story, they are given class time to prepare at least twenty questions and answers on the literal, interpretive or applied levels. They are then prepared for the game.

The teacher starts the game by asking a question. Students who know the answer raise their hands. The student who is called on and answers the question correctly takes the teacher's place at the front of the room, and the teacher moves to the student's desk. The procedure is then repeated with the student asking the question and then moving to the desk of the student answering correctly. Students receive an A for answering a question successfully and may participate by answering, asking, and moving as many times as they are called on by other students.

The objectives of the game are to try and get everyone in a different desk before class is over, to earn an easy grade, and to come to a deeper understanding of the literary work.

Chris James, Chesapeake City Schools

READING understanding/enjoyment

Near the end of the year after students have been reading from a list, we have a Favorite Character Day. Each student gives a monologue before the class pretending he/she is that character, and in the oral presentation describes an incident or portion of the character's life without identifying the character or book. Students listening to these monologues have a numbered list; as their classmates make their presentations, they write the name of the character and the book in which the character appears in order on the list. The student with the highest number of correct answers is acclaimed the winner—and given some small reward.

Peggy Finley, Albemarle County

READING motivation

After students have read widely from short stories or novels in an individualized reading unit, have them write "blurbs" (like those on book jackets) to serve as "come-on's" to pique the interest of fellow readers. To write an accurate and appealing annotation in a highly condensed form requires a thorough knowledge of the book or story and the ability to capture its essence. It also challenges the student to find exactly the right words and the appropriate style for the particular selection.

In a 10th grade English class we loaded a large library cart with short story collections. Students read ten to fifteen stories and then wrote summaries of their five favorites. From these summaries they chose their two favorites, wrote the annotations, and signed their names. These were typed and compiled in a booklet entitled *Short Stories à la Carte* for which the students designed a cover. Everyone got a copy. Both the public and school libraries were delighted to have this bibliography of student favorites as a resource and reference.

Sample annotation from *Short Stories à la Carte*:

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber

How can one man command a Navy hydroplane, perform brilliant surgery, be a hero in a murder trial and face a firing squad—all in one afternoon while his wife is at the beauty parlor? Read this wonderful story and meet the most famous of Thurber's hen-pecked husbands.

Bunny Hunter, Albemarle County

"Where Do I Begin?"

CAROL P. CARTER

If we, as English teachers, want to help develop students into lifelong readers, we must first provide successful reading experiences for them. The first question which each of us must pose, therefore, before beginning any unit—whether it be independently developed or recommended by the school curriculum—is "What materials can I select that will be suitable and will cultivate a further desire to read?"

Perhaps the most efficient way to confront that question is to ascertain what the teacher must not do. Prescribed book lists, often recommended by people outside the classroom, are frowned upon for obvious reasons. They allow no flexibility for the needs and interests of the individual student. Also rejected are books that should be read in preparation for standardized examinations and assigned books for book reports, where the emphasis is on meeting the requirement and reading a certain number of books instead of on the individual's response. A rule of thumb might be that students' education should not be future-oriented: reading certain books as preparation for college or as preparation for anything else lends little credence to the present assignments, which should be made on the basis of the students' ability to read, understand, and participate in a work *now*. That is not to say that having read a particular book will not some day come in handy; it is to say that present selection should benefit the present student.

What do we need to know about students in order to make literary selections which will be beneficial and rewarding to each of them? A number of variables emerge. Louise Rosenblatt suggests that the student's "general background, level of maturity, linguistic history, and major difficulties and aspirations" (*Literature as Exploration*, 1965) are factors which should guide selection of materials, while Arthur Daigon asserts that "students' developmental characteristics, intellectual, linguistic, experiential characteristics . . . will bear directly on their success" (Richard Meade and Robert Small, *Literature for Adolescents*, 1973) in reading literature. These broad assertions can more precisely be considered in terms of age, ability, interest, emotional and physical experiences, and possible student enjoyment.

Two significant elements are age and correlative experience. Because adolescents are still in the "process of becoming," they are limited emotionally and situationally; however, they have accumulated vicarious experiences through reading, listening, and observing. It follows, then, that our selection should not be based on what the students should read,

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but rather on their past experiences and present emotional maturity since these are the conditions which determine the students' degree of response.

Along with age and experience, we must also consider the students' abilities. They accomplish little in terms of productivity or self-esteem if they must read a selection which is beyond their ability. Even though there are readability formulas available for measuring a work's difficulty level, these formulas often do not determine the degree of conceptual maturity required to understand the work. Certainly, a piece of literature should not be so far advanced that students can derive no pleasure from it; on the other hand, it is acceptable and admirable that a work might require their having to stretch a little here and there to get that pleasure.

The preference for students' gaining pleasure from their reading implies that they must be interested in the work. A number of critics oppose this philosophy of reading selection based on personal interest. They fear that the students, if allowed to read just what they are interested in, will forever stay on one plateau, never growing in their choice of reading material. Studies suggest otherwise. Some books appeal to adolescents at only one period during their lives. Because of a book's high interest at that moment, it may offer an insight which the student may not have gotten from a more difficult work at that time. But that reading and that insight might pave the way for more sophisticated literature and perception. For example, the reader of *The Chocolate War* today may be led to *A Separate Peace* and Gray's "Ode On A Distant Prospect of Eton College" tomorrow.

Unquestionably, this information regarding student response to reading is invaluable for the teacher. There are additional elements to be weighed in the selection process. In order for teachers to guide adolescents' choices of literature, they must be acquainted with the psychology of teenagers—their overall interests, predominant concerns, recurring problems, and stages of reading development. Teachers must understand individual students—their needs, conflicts, abilities, interests, or any personal and social circumstances which might make particular books interesting or illuminating. In order to best employ this combination of knowledge in the selection process, teachers ideally should have a wide reading background and be enthusiastic about matching students and reading materials. These qualities will enable them to bring adolescents and books together, to choose the right selection to fit a particular moment, to determine appropriate times for certain books, and to have the knowledge of helpful selection aids such as *The Library Journal, The Horn Book, Booklist,* NCTE publications, and advisory lists of instructional media published by some state departments of public instruction.

Being widely read and having a basic understanding of students should provide teachers with an ability to perceive what kinds of experiences and values are emphasized in different literary works. Utilizing these qualities, teachers must begin the selection process on the basis of what

the students can handle, while simultaneously avoiding meaningless, trivial, and faddish works. Materials and activities should be pertinent to the present or potential worlds of the students, should be varied to meet these students' individual interests and abilities, and should offer a stimulating challenge.

What all this boils down to is that the two things which matter in the reading process are the individual student and the individual book. If the student and book have been effectively matched, a number of advantages result. The reader may have a vicarious experience which can aid in interpreting personal feelings or give credence to temperament and questionings. Literature can also help readers see that they have things in common with others: certain inner needs, thoughts, impulses, emotions are normal and occur in others too. Even the student who feels ostracized by some physical nonconformity can discover how characters like Cyrano de Bergerac or even other adolescents have coped with this problem. Above all, discovering through books that one is not alone in feelings and problems can help students bring their own troubles into the open and discuss them. And finally, literature can be a healthy medium for channeling impulses that may be socially unacceptable.

All these criteria for effective selection, resulting in rich reading experiences, apply to a myriad of classroom strategies. If, for example, teachers wish to select a work for in-common reading, they should be aware of the literature *per se* as well as the students' divergent abilities and interests. Keeping these facts in mind, teachers will know that the students will read the same book at different levels and that they must provide guidance at these various levels. If, on the other hand, teachers decide to institute an individualized or free reading program, they can still count on these established criteria to guide student selection of their own reading materials. They might also recognize the need to establish an atmosphere that is conducive to book selection by providing library browsing time, allowing class planning and conversations about books in large or small groups, offering quiet reading time, panel discussions and dramatizations of books.

The consensus among a number of English educators is that there should be a variety of reading strategies implemented in the classroom. What holds true for all these suggestions, whether it be in-common, small group, or individualized reading, is that students' interests, abilities, and backgrounds must always be the basis for selection and relevancy. Only by being concerned with our students as individuals with unique needs and abilities can we hope to provide meaningful, successful reading experiences which will create lifelong readers.

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series books of interest to children with reading disabilities. *Good Reading for Poor Readers* (Spache, 1974) includes tradebooks and other materials for slow readers, and books are grouped by interest area with reading and interest levels provided.

High Interest/Easy Reading, published by NCTE, features content relating to growing up, social problems, and families. *I Read; You Read; We Read* (Children's Services Division, 1971) reviews appropriate books, poems, stories, and recording for disadvantaged children with recommended grade levels. *Books for the Gifted Child* (Baskin and Harris, 1980) is designed to provide assistance in the selection of books that respond to the special problems and capabilities of intellectually gifted children; an excellent review of the problems of the gifted appears in the introduction. Also, a specialized bibliography in "Using Bibliotherapy with Gifted Children" (Frasier and McCannon, 1981) provides titles of books dealing with the problems of gifted students.

The preceding specialized bibliographies are useful in supplementing standard selection aids such as *Children's Catalog, Junior High School Library Catalog,* and *Senior High School Library Catalog* usually available in the school library media center. These comprehensive selection aids also review recommended tradebooks in all subject areas. In addition, *The Elementary School Library Collection* may also be very useful since it includes all types of media and provides readability levels for reading materials, and the *Index to Poetry for Children and Young People* (Brewton, 1978) will facilitate the location of suitable poetry in children's collections by subject area.

If you are interested in further reading on the subject of bibliotherapy, *Facilitating Human Development Through Reading* (Zaccaria and Moses, 1968), *Bibliotherapy: Methods and Materials* (Moody and Limper, 1971) and *Bibliotherapy* (Haldeman and Idstein, 1977) provide background on the theoretical and practical applications of bibliotherapy as well as bibliographies of recommended juvenile tradebooks for classroom use.

As appropriate books are identified, the classroom teacher can develop a file of titles by bibliotherapeutic theme. Bibliographic information, a story summary, and suggested reading/listening/viewing levels can be entered on a 4x6 card for each title. This will facilitate the ability to match the right child to the right book as the need arises.

Reading and the Interdisciplinary Curriculum—A Special Pleasure

KATHLEEN K. SNYDER and CAROL P. PALAY

Maya Angelou's childhood was often dark and disturbing, filled with family upheaval, personal violence and racial injustice. Her autobiography, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings,* speaks of these turbulent events and characters, but it also mentions peaceful times and very kind people. One black woman, Mrs. Bertha Flowers of Stamps, Arkansas welcomed Maya into her neat, orderly home, gave Maya her time, and transmitted to the young girl her own love of learning and literature. For the rest of her life, reading remained a special pleasure for Maya Angelou. Transferring that pleasure to high school students is a priority of a total interdisciplinary unit we developed which includes Angelou's work. The unit explores numerous aspects of immigration in America and the contributions to our heritage from various ethnic and racial minorities.

This unit is a vital part of our American Civilization I (AC 13) program at Lake Braddock Secondary School, an open school of more than 4,000 students and over 240 faculty members in the Fairfax County School system of northern Virginia. Most Lake Braddock students enroll in AC I for two periods each day in their junior year. The course, taught by interdisciplinary teams of both English and social studies teachers, surveys American literature and history. It fulfills all state requirements for 11th grade English and social studies while incorporating aspects of American music, art, architecture and customs—everything from the family history of the Lees of Virginia to regional American cooking and crafts. The interdisciplinary approach places a great deal of emphasis on writing and, most importantly, on reading from a wide variety of sources. What follows is a description of our immigration unit, an illustration of how interdisciplinary studies can foster good reading habits.

We began the unit with an historical survey of the various groups who came to America and what they felt and wrote about the immigrant experience, from the earliest colonial settlers, such as Captain John Smith, to today's Vietnamese immigrants. Our emphasis, however, was on the large waves of immigration in the 19th and early 20th centuries. After viewing *The Emigrants,* a film tracing the harsh voyage of a Scandinavian family to America, students prepared a family history tracing their own ancestors as far back as they could go and placed their roots on a time line concurrent with famous American events. Thus, the study of history became a personal experience. Using their history text,

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as well as supplementary materials, they explored the reasons people came to America, where they settled, government policies and quotas dealing with immigration, and problems of assimilation and prejudice the various immigrant groups encountered.

All of the students were exposed not only to texts on immigration and to newspaper accounts found in the school's microfilm *New York Times* collection, but also to the plight of immigrants as portrayed in various kinds of literature. They read, among others, Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth*, Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky," and Elmer Rice's "Street Scene." Especially effective was an excerpt from *Farwell to Manzanar*, a Japanese-American girl's recollections of internment during World War II. In addition to the reading, some students were fortunate to view the Smithsonian's "Nation of Nations" exhibit at the Institution's Museum of History and Technology in Washington, D. C. The catalogue from the exhibit is an excellent resource for this unit.

We broadened the scope of the unit by including literature pertaining to more recent problems encountered by many other ethnic minorities, particularly those of American blacks. Our students read the first chapter of Malcolm X's autobiography in the anthology, *Black Voices*, a selection by Dick Gregory, and poetry representative of writers from Paul Lawrence Dunbar to Langston Hughes.

A truly interdisciplinary program can do more than integrate historical content with appropriate literature. It can encompass compostion skills, salient readings, oral exercises and multi-media experiences. One successful activity from our unit involved students in a series of tasks called "the immigrant experience." Students were divided into groups of seven. They received the following instructions and all necessary materials:

> ***This is a two period activity. There are seven tasks to perform. During the first hour, you should decide who is best qualified to complete each of the tasks, sign up, find the materials and directions for your task, and then do it. During the second period, get back together again as a group and share what you did. Be sure to mention to your group two or three new pieces of information you just learned from your activity. When you are all finished sharing, your group task is to make a collage with words and illustrations showing your perception of the "immigrant experience." Each group member must add something. Be sure to include the cartoon.***

The Immigrant Experience

Skills Involved	*Materials*	*Objective*
TASK #1 "Songs"—Students listened to music, read lyrics, answered questions on selections	Recordings of "Pity the Poor Immigrant" Bob Dylan "The New World Symphony" Anton Dvorack "There's a Boat That's Leavin' Soon for New York" George and Ira Gershwin from "Porgy and Bess" "The Other Generation" Rogers and Hammerstein from "Flower Drum Song" "America" Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim from "West Side Story"	–to understand immigrant contributions to American music from folk songs to musical comedy to symphonic music –to enjoy the music –to recognize various composers –to recognize various instruments brought here by various cultures
TASK #2 "The Writing on the Wall"—Students view and study a bulletin board display and answer questions	Pictures and cartoons from *Nation of Nations* Catalogue including reproductions of tickets, charts and photos	–to see the conditions of immigrant life –to see the prejudice immigrants encountered
TASK #3 "Tradition—An Account"—Students discuss and write	Ditto instruction sheet to write an account of a "folk tale, custom, tradition or character" from one of several nationalities represented in student groups	–to share some personal experiences and traditions –to write without fear of correction
TASK #4 "American English"—Students read and write	Sections of *The Story of American English*, by J. N. Hook, New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972	–to realize the vast contributions made by other languages to our language

TASK #5 "Ethnic Humor"—Students read and write	"Simple" by Langston Hughes in *Black Voices* Abraham Chapman, ed., New York, New American Library, 1968 "Christopher Kaplan" by Leonard A. Ross in *The Comic Spirit in America* John K. Massey, ed., New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1969	–to enjoy the selections –to gain a different perspective (other than that of the white middle class American)
TASK #6 "Political Cartoons"—Students view and analyze historic cartoons; they draw a cartoon	Cartoons from *Nation o) Nations* Peter C. Marzio, ed., New York, Harper and Row, 1976	–to see the immigrant experience in a different medium
TASK #7 "Immigrants at Work"—Students read, write and discuss	"Roberto Acuna" by Studs Terkel in *Comment: An Anthology in Prose* Edmund Farrell, James L. Pierce, Mabel H. Pittman, Kerry M. Wood, eds., Glenview, Illinois, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1976	–to experience the values and hardships of Mexican-Americans

The students benefited in many ways from this group assignment. It was, in effect, an in-school "field trip." In a sense they visited new places and saw each other with new insight as they discovered and shared the variety of their own traditions. One student was moved to write the following warm reminiscence which he shared with the class:

> *Cosby Harrison is my grandfather. He was born and raised in Tuskegee, Alabama where he still lives today. I never really talked with him about the old days, but I know he's seen it all—from the bad times of the Depression in the 1930's to the cheerful times of the 1950's. My grandfather was, and still is, a farmer. When he was middle aged, most of the big farms were owned by rich white families who hired blacks and other immigrants for unfair wages. My grandfather had a large farm where he gave his friends and other members of the black community jobs with fair and equal pay.*

My grandparents had seven kids, four of whom went on to be valedictorians of their high school classes. Six of the seven graduated from Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T. Washington. My father used to tell me about how strong my grandfather was and how he would never miss a day without getting up and going to the fields. He owned a lot of land which he used for crops and livestock. Cosby Harrison was not well educated, but he was intelligent. He earned, deserved, and got the respect of the black community and all the people who knew him.

The wide range of materials the students read personalized for them the abstract concept of immigration. By reading from traditional sources, such as novels, plays, short stories and poems, as well as from non-traditional materials—letters, memoirs, diaries, biographies, case studies and newspaper articles—and from their own accounts, such as that about Cosby Harrison, the story of immigration became the story of real people. Our students thus discovered, as did Maya Angelou, the special pleasure reading can provide.

Poetry Appreciation: Preparing the "Seedbed"

JAMES P. BECK

Frankly, students hate-and-fear poetry. How could we hope to encourage lifelong reading of that least-popular genre? Should we even bother to try? Young people often feel that poetry is too difficult, a tangle to trip you up. Occasionally, they overread, digging for the hidden symbols (and missing fine surfaces), or they underread, getting the "plot" only (and missing nuances and overtones).

At least my students do. Why this unhappiness—and, can we teachers help? The main cause seems irremediable. Psychologically, some youngsters and adolescents just don't yet have the life-experience to grasp poetry's insights. (It's not critical terminology, but empathetic recognition, which lets us appreciate a poem.)

Another cause, however, we can attack. Educationally, many secondary and college classrooms seem either to ignore poetry, or still to teach it in too advanced, too formal, too academic a way to let students truly connect with poetry personally, to foster appreciation instead of mastery. We may close-read or explicate older, classic poems for "the right answer," but this may backfire, and just solidify America's cultural stereotype of poetry as a dull, dangerous drag.

A lecturer in English at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, James P. Beck writes that his preference is teaching freshmen.

I for one no longer aim to have my teenagers master poetry formally now, so much as to become more receptive and open for later. Not a knowledge-gain, but an attitude-change. At first I thought I was shirking, maybe being anti-intellectual, irresponsible, surrendering content-mastery. Then I saw how nonproductive and even harmful my usual poetry unit was.

So I changed my whole approach. By student response, I *know* I'm doing better now, and I *feel* I'm doing just about as well as I can for them at this stage. More students than ever before feel a new ease with poetry (not all of them; the stubborn stereotype of poetry as cryptic frill is pervasive). Students' asking to keep our unit's mini-anthology of poems, to show to their friends, is no proof of perfection, but a nice sign.

First, content. I now omit the traditional "classics." We naturally feel we should expose the students to such culture—*but* this may only convince them that poetry is dull lofty grandeur. Instead, I now offer poems which are mainly brief; modern; and varied—not just mild and decorous, but wild and wacky, zesty, witty.

Second, technique. I now teach almost *no* poetic terminology, and I no longer explicate ("dig into") many poems deeply. Again, we naturally think terms and analysis will help students—but it may only convince them that poetry is something you can't grasp hands-on, that you need rubber gloves and forceps! Instead, I simply give students a roster of a dozen facets or ways a poem can mean—or be—and let them choose, cafeteria-fashion.

Third, correctness. We feel that we should help students get "the right" meaning. But legitimate responses to poetry are varied, and this approach may only be crimping their own response. If students don't *see* a meaning *themselves*, with only a little light-hand guidance and not heavy prescription from us, then our telling 'em the truth, will only give them rote content-mastery, not real ability to read on their own.

I give them a Handy Formula: "A poem is its *plot* (literal, paraphrasable events-characters-setting) plus one or more *facets* (ways in which that subject-matter is used). First, read precisely for the literal plot, and state it. Don't symbol-hunt or free-associate! Then, try on the varied facets, to explore the poem more."

Then I give students the following facets, with the warning that they are not rules, but tools. There's no One Right Facet. The next reader will see a different facet in the same poem: you might see two facets. And I the teacher won't say which is right. The facet to use is the one with which you feel most easy discussing the poem. (Not that there are no better facets or that a poem means anything you see in it. Indeed, the class will see that some facets turn out to be better for a given poem.) Students find this cafeteria-approach disconcerting at first ("what answer do you want to hear?"), but then soon helpful ("I see it this way, and here's why").

To proceed to the new via the familiar, I often start off with the three facets (uses made of subject-matter) which students already know best (and mistakenly believe that all poetry is):

- MESSAGE. The poem tells a truth about life, philosophically.
- MORAL. The poem conveys a lesson we should do, like a sermon.
- ANALOGY. The poem's plot symbolizes "something else"—message, moral. But whoa—a poem may be just these other, down-to-earth, facets too:
- REPORTAGE. The poem just photographs its subject, to savor it *per se*.
- DRAMATIC SHOWING. The poem doesn't just tell us about its subject so that we know, but shows it in action (re-creates it on page) so that we feel.
- TONE-MOOD. The poem conveys the poet's own voice, attitude, "feel." (Varied and subtle, tones include formal-informal; decorous or wacky; joyous or angry; blustering or wry-witty; maybe just musing-and-reflecting; and so on.)
- COMEDY-HUMOR. Poem is light verse, entertaining for its own sake.
- SOCIAL CRITICISM. Poem attacks some wrong (maybe with satire too).
- CHARACTER PORTRAIT. Poem paints a person, studies psychology, human nature.
- NARRATIVE. Poem tells a story, spins a tale for its own sake.
- PLEASING PATTERN. A tapestry or a song; poem is pleasant flow of images, and rhythm-and-rhyme. (No, no message, no moral—necessarily!)
- SPORTIVE SPRINT, or "WHEE." A variant of Tone-Mood. The poet just juggles the subject-matter to express his exuberant aliveness, higher awakeness!

I apply these facets (different teachers can adapt the approach to different levels and aims) by handing out "short takes"—a mini-anthology of no fewer than 107 brief poems I've fit onto five dittoed pages. First, we get The Plot. Then we try on facets with a light hand, not to narrow down to The Answer, but to open out to poetry's fine variety. We can begin with a traditional poem—Wiliam Blake's "Sick Rose:"

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm

Hath found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Doth thy life destroy.

The literal plot is "lurking worm destroys rose by night." Some students *under*read, feeling the poem is about gardening only. Others

*over*read, seeing the worm as communism, adultery, and more. But the core meaning is merely that "evil can destroy good subtly." In terms of the facets, the poem can be a message about life, thus, delivered via Analogy too. (But if a student *still* sees the poem as Reportage about horticulture—then that's just fine. I will not attempt to force student-mastery, training vines in hothouse fashion, lest I spoil the seedbed for student-appreciation later on, bloomings then.)

Then, the modern poem "Houses" works well for mid-teenagers:

The dentists dig deep to extract / old houses from the city's jaw— / they remove the rotting brick roots, / mess around with the disease-puss of the sewers, / their pneumatic drills explore the aching caverns / before the wounds are allowed to heal— / and then they build a gleaming / white skyline of false teeth / not rooted in the jawbone of tradition / but whole rows juggled / on a precarious dental plate.

The plot is merely that "urban renewal replaces old with new buildings." It's Reportage thus. But the poem is also a Social Criticism of new architecture as kind of plastic. And the Tone's there—low-key, but acid. And the whole thing's delivered via Analogy of dentistry. Most students can see all this, and sense the non-Establishment stance too.

But at this point in class I must quickly inject poems which are mainly imagistic, reportorial, just themselves, in order to cool down the flight of symbol-hunting and to savor the surfaces. Here's William Carlos Williams' "Poem:"

As the cat / climbed over / the top of // the jamcloset / first the right / forefoot // carefully / then the hind / stepped down // into the pit of / the empty / flowerpot.

What's this then? Just a photo of what we've all seen.

Or this concrete poem, "Ping Pong:"

ping pong
ping pong ping
pong ping pong
ping pong

What a Dramatic Showing of the subject itself, just for its own sake!

Or Richard Brautigan's "Poem:"

and just around the corner, there, lying in the street, dead, with baby-seat agog, on its side, a supermarket basket, killed by the wind.

The kids smile at this just-plain Reporting presented with a wry, sportive Tone too.

A perennial favorite is May Swenson's "After the Dentist," which not only Reports, but Shows Dramatically, and with wry Tone—and Pleasing Pattern and diction and analogy too!

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A Future Teacher's Response to Censorship in the High Schools

BETH EAGLE

When I read in *Newsweek* that people were burning books in Warsaw, Indiana, I was shocked. I looked into the accompanying photograph, and the dark horror of the scene came to life. Suddenly, I was there, and the firelight was bright enough for me to see the face of the one man who was steadily working. He first attracted my attention, as he moved constantly between the school and the fire, not stopping to join in the arguments around him nor to gaze into the burning light. He entered the school, pushing an empty wheelbarrow, and returned each time with a load of books stacked neatly. He did not hurry as he tossed them into the flames. With particularly large and thick volumes, he used a pocket knife to separate the books' binding and pages. He was methodical, almost machine-like, not even looking at the titles of the books he was burning. I thought of the children who this man must have thought he was protecting, and I remembered when I was their age.

I remembered the anguish I suffered at fifteen. I was in that awkward, difficult stage of development that most of us have experienced. I felt unattractive, and unworthy: I didn't like myself very much, nor could I see how anyone else could like—much less, love—me. I was afraid and insecure. I could be intensely happy one moment, and despondent the next. My parents tried to help, but how could they understand, when I didn't understand myself? I had friends, but even with them, I couldn't put what I was feeling into words—and besides, it was too deeply personal to talk about. I wanted and needed very badly to reach out to others, but something within me—perhaps just the inability to express myself—thwarted my attempts. And so I was terribly lonely, and very sad.

But I was a voracious reader, and no one had ever pulled a book from my hands. And so I read. I read *Catcher in the Rye*, and found that J. D. Salinger had described in words the emotional turmoil that I was experiencing. I discovered that I was not alone in the world, and in the process, I learned to recognize my own fears, shortcomings, and dreams. I was afforded the benefit of Salinger's experience and imagination. It was through his writing, and others' like his, that I learned to understand myself, and I became a happier person.

Indeed, communication is one of the most important keys to all understanding and knowledge. And it is written communication that breaks the boundaries of time and space. As a girl of fifteen, I was able to benefit

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from the ideas of an older man thousands of miles away. I was a girl who had rigid standards and expectations for myself, one without much understanding for the weaknesses of others. And then I read *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,* and Ken Kesey pointed out to me that every man, no matter what his weaknesses, has value. I looked at the sour-faced Spanish teacher, and realized that she, too, had hopes, fears, and disappointments. I learned to share a smile with the girl all the other kids teased cruelly, because Kesey had made me wonder if she too might be lonely. I learned, then, how to try to understand others—and how to respect them as human beings. Kesey taught me to be compassionate. I learned that there was much more to the world than just my own happiness.

I think of this righteous man who burned his children's books, and I wonder: Why would he deny his children a learning experience that would make their world—and his—better? Surely he recognized that we live in a troubled and violent world and that understanding could only make it a better one. What evil did he find in these books that would outweigh their beneficial effects? And further, what made this man believe that he could practice censorship, and escape the consequences?

Admittedly, some of the books that the people were burning might be thought to include offensive language or objectionable sexual material. Further, some parents might have objected to these novels because they felt that they would expose their children to unacceptable ideas and tempt them into immoral behavior. Because of these objections, I understand why some adults might be afraid of these books. Parents want their children to be exposed only to "good" or moral ideas because they are afraid that a wider range of choices will corrupt their children. These parents see only the immorality in these books.

But I believe these books are moral. As a teenager, I read Theodore Drieser's *An American Tragedy* and John Steinbeck's *The Winter of Our Discontent.* They were lively and interesting, and I read them willingly. And I learned more from them about "morality" than I could ever have learned from a sermon delivered from the pulpit. For Drieser and Steinbeck not only entertained me, but they also quite subtly pointed out the "right" or moral choices. It is true that Steinbeck, in *The Winter of Our Discontent,* exposes a moral and spiritual corruption in our society. But had my reading been censored, I would never have seen how an ordinary man's moral convictions can make him truly heroic. When I read that Ethan Hawley nearly had an affair, but didn't, nearly robbed a grocery store, but didn't, and almost committed suicide, but didn't, I also saw how he nearly ruined his marriage, his life, and the future of his children, but didn't. Steinbeck forced me to empathize with Ethan, and by doing so, he made me face the daily temptations that Ethan faced. And through Ethan's heroic actions, I too, became a moral victor.

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An Old Acquaintance Dies

JOHN A. DAVIS

I am not by nature a gregarious person, nor do I enjoy ceremonial functions. As a consequence I try to avoid such unpleasant gatherings as wine and cheese parties, retirement dinners, teas, weddings and funerals. However, I would have overcome my aversion to the somber camaraderie and doleful ritual of funerals to attend the late burial of a most intimate acquaintance of mine, and, in truth, an intimate acquaintance of my generation, that generation which came to maturity during the World War II years, married, and contributed to the baby boom of the 1950's. Perhaps I might have sent a small floral arrangement and contributed a few, certainly not all, of the expected amenities in the viewing room had I been informed of the time and place of burial. Such gestures I would have made, not from a sense of loss or grief, but from a sense of propriety. I could not just ignore the death of an acquaintance who had sat down with my family to our evening meals over a ten or twelve-year period, who had accompanied us for many years on our annual vacation to the Atlantic shore, who had lived in the family car after each of our two sons reached the legal driving age, who had frequently usurped my wife's and my role as guide and mentor to our sons. Yes, I certainly would have attended the funeral of the generation gap had I only known.

My breach here is to be excused though. The death was not widely publicized, if at all. In fact, I am sure there are many—sociologists, psychologists, perhaps even the competing generations themselves—who will say the report of the generations gap's death is greatly exaggerated. But, be assured, the generation gap is dead. It has been unceremoniously buried by a substantial number of writers of adolescent literature and lies in unattended graves in Manhattan, in Sneden's Landing, N. Y. and Wayne, Pa. and in any number of hometown cemeteries around the country. The official obituary may not appear for a number of years, at least until sociologists can fashion a sufficient number of case studies to allow no question about the health of the corpse. But as a long-time student of adolescent literature with considerable reason to trust the acuity of such novelists as Paul Zindel, Barbara Wersba and others, I am willing to accept their post-mortem: death of natural causes.

In some ways the death comes as something of a shock. Born in the 1960's the phenomenon has died in its adolescent years, hardly dry behind the ears. More shocking to those who might not have been watching too closely is that death could come to what many considered one of the more hale and robust specimens of twentieth-century Ameri-

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can culture. It has been ten or so years since Hila Colman's *Claudia, Where Are You?* (1969), Lee Kingman's *The Peter Pan Bag* (1970) and Barbara Wersba's *Run Softly, Go Fast* (1970), to mention only a few, omniously detailed the prevalence and virility of the generation gap, with the unstated but obvious implication that youth would *never* understand or adopt the life patterns of their elders.

Colman's heroine, Claudia, and Kingman's Wendy flee rather affluent homes primarily to find a life free of what they consider the baneful influence of overly concerned and misguided parents. By the end of each book the girls have managed to become individuals who recognize that purity in their lives can come only if they protect themselves constantly from the hypocrisy, deceit and conformity that stifle their parents' existence. Barbara Wersba's *Run Softly, Go Fast*, probably the most relentless study of the failure of the generations to understand each other, probes the evolution of David Marks' early love for his aggressive, dynamic, successful but morally corrupt father to a bitter hatred as the father tries to impose on David his conception of the American Dream: college, business, marriage, many cocktails and all the "things" money can buy.

Nor has it been too long since adolescent novelists demonstrated to their youthful audience that the chasm between the generations was a primary cause of their fascination with drugs, their sexual experimentation with its often regrettable consequences, their generally unhappy state that made any act of rebellion somehow worthwhile. Just a few years ago one had only to scan the titles of adolescent novels in the bookstalls to note the ubiquity of the generation gap theme: *Can You Sue Your Parents for Malpractice?, Count Me Gone, Nobody Waved Goodbye,* and *I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip.* The irreverence and contempt the adolescents felt for their elders, particularly their parents, were nowhere more succinctly expressed than in the names John Conlan of *The Pigman* coined for his parents: "Bore" for his father and "The Old Lady" and "Hyper" for his mother.

At least until midway through the decade of the 1970's the generation gap seemed especially vigorous and enjoying superb health, apparently destined for a long, though not necessarily a happy, life. However, in retrospect one can see that sometime in the Seventies evidence of some fatal malady in the generation gap must have become apparent to the more astute novelists/observers of the adolescent scene. There was a perceptible shift by some major writers of adolescent literature away from plots in which the inability of adults to understand the needs of adolescence caused aberrant behavior in the young. Rather, these novelists placed their protagonists in unique and frequently ominous situations and left them to cope with circumstance not at all common to adolescence in general. Recall M. E. Kerr's *Gentlehands* (1978) where Buddy is forced to reconcile his affection and admiration for his cultured grand-

father with the fact that he had been a brutal Nazi concentration camp officer responsible for the degradation and suffering of thousands of prisoners. True, there is a running conflict between Buddy and his father over Buddy's summer romance with the daughter of an extremely wealthy summer resident of the town, but the conflict hardly reflects a philosophical confrontation of adult and adolescent life styles.

In *The Undertaker's Gone Bananas* (1978) Paul Zindel likewise provides his hero and heroine with compatible family relationships while they pursue the diabolical undertaker and wino-killer, Mr. Hulka. Robert Cormier in, first, *I Am the Cheese* (1977) and, later, *After the First Death* (1979) places his adolescents in plausible, though certainly uncommon, situations far removed from adult-adolescent disagreements over life goals and infinitely more threatening. Paul, the young hero of *I Am the Cheese* is inhumanly victimized by both the "mob" and some shadowy government agency, the former in its successful attempt to destroy his reporter father and the latter in its almost sadistic attempts to pick Paul's brain to learn more about the father's investigation of organized crime. In *After the First Death* the terrorist hijacking of a school bus results in the assassination of the young driver, Kate, and the psychological destruction of the book's narrator, Ben Marchand, who is selected as a courier to the terrorists not for his strength, but for his weakness. A final example of adolescents in conflict with foes far more sinister and menacing than a father or a teacher or a bureaucrat is Norma and Harry Mazer's *The Solid Gold Kid* (1977). Five youths, including the only son of a millionaire, are kidnapped and held for ransom by a stupid but vicious and dangerous couple calling themselves Pearl and Bogie. The five eventually escape, though each will forever carry scars of this gruesome experience.

Gradually then the generation gap became less of a thematic concern in adolescent literature; the heretofore vicious conflict between adolescents and those in authority was frequently replaced by a conflict between adolescents and some random malevolence in the world. Why? The unkind might say that novelists realized the generation conflict had been overworked in young adult novels and turned to the more dramatic conflicts as a means of self-preservation, as a means to retain their audience. Perhaps this is partly true. I like to think that the novelists sensed a changing mood in American culture, that adolescents and adults alike were discovering that their internecine struggle was rather trivial when measured against the external threats of atomic war, economic chaos, poverty and pollution. Consequently, a truce was declared between the generations, and adolescents were then instructed in the dimensions of total and indiscriminate evil.

In any case, the dying breath of the generation gap was heard very clearly in Paul Zindel's *The Pigman's Legacy* (1980), even if its shortness of breath and gray pallor had been missed in Barbara Wersba's *Tunes for a Small Harmonica* (1976). Wersba, whose earlier *Run Softly, Go*

Fast was so compelling a portrait of the failure of youth and age to reconcile their ideals and their morality, has in this later book made the reconciliation. Although the young J. F. McAllister encounters the same materialism, hypocrisy and phoniness in her mother that David Marks found in his father, J. F. feels only a personal embarrassment for her mother's behavior and acknowledges that she herself is certainly a cause of real embarrassment to her mother—hardly the life-shattering hatred Davy Marks felt for his father six years earlier.

The formal announcement of the death of the generation gap came in *The Pigman's Legacy* where Zindel resurrected the trouble and alienated hero and heroine of the earlier *Pigman*, John Conlan and Lorraine Jensen. Once again the two are trying to explain away their involvement in yet another death of an elderly benefactor. However, it is a different John and Lorraine the reader meets here: they are certainly less arrogant and self-indulgent, although John does suffer a relapse when he gambles away the Colonel's casino winnings. And as a consequence of their earlier experience with Mr. Pignati they are more conscious of the responsibility they must assume for their behavior. They also seem far less prone to blame the adult world for the occasional outrages to their adolescent lives. But, above all, the bitter and grimly humorous conflicts with parents that enlivened *The Pigman* for its adolescent audience are totally absent in its sequel. Lorraine now exhibits an almost benevolent tolerance for her mother's paranoid concern for permanently preserving Lorraine's virginity, even when such an "old fashioned" notion competes with her peers' blasé assumption that John and Lorraine had "been making out like bandits with each other for years." John too displays almost an affection for her parents, carrying his dinner dishes to the sink and occasionally washing them. And though they are still "Bore" and "The Old Lady" in his dialogue, there are no more pranks to frustrate his father and send his mother into a frenzy of cleaning.

But to the death announcement: John writes in one of his chapters:

> *But what I really think is terrific is that our parents understand Lorraine and me much better now that they realize they're just as much in transition as we are. It really takes the heat off us now that our parents, our teachers, and everybody knows that life is* all *adolescence.*

This simplistic explanation for the cessation of hostility between the generations is an intriguing one, and obviously not as simplistic as it appears. I will leave the testing of the truth of the premise that it is the adults' belated recognition of life as all adolescence that permanently closed the generation gap to those better equipped to resolve ambiguities. I will only suggest that my experience with the young has convinced

me that the generation gap did die quietly in the last decade, as adolescent novelists intuitively sensed, but not solely because adults ultimately saw some personal benefit in the uninhibited freedom the youth demanded as they opened the gap in the 1950's and 60's.

Continued from p. 89

My left upper
lip and half
my nose is gone.
I drink my coffee
on the right from
a warped cup
whose left lip dips.
My cigarette's
thick as a finger.
Somebody else's.
I put lip-
stick on a cloth-
stuffed doll's
face that's
surprised when one
side smiles.

Thus one approach to poetry: one only. It seems to quickly cure symbol-hunting and promote surface-savoring, but also to foster greater appreciation of poetry's depth-and-variety—though only as much as the individual student is ready to absorb at his or her particular level. Thus we'd avoid the force-feeding *now*, which might choke off a healthy response *later*, when the older reader may both like, and indeed need, poetry.

Continued from p. 91

Similarly, Drieser made me aware, in *An American Tragedy*, of greed and lust. But his protagonist was no hero, and Drieser made me recognize that fact. And I went on thinking about my own values and "morality" long after I put the book down.

These books did provide me with a wider range of choices that I could apply to my own life, but they did not encourage me to behave immorally. They showed me what could happen, and they encouraged me to think about what is "right" and what is "wrong." And I grew up in the process. If we allow that man—and the others like him—to continue burning books, then we are, in effect, denying our children their opportunities to find understanding and narrowing their range of experiences.

The Reader Meter

H. D. Rowe

I take it that for those of us who are seriously concerned about developing lifelong readers the overriding question, the question which silences not only screams for utility but prayers for the inculcation of proper attitudes, the question that takes precedence over even the production of elegant and profitable irresponsibility, is, Who Has Read The Most? The importance of this question is implicit in the instruction given students and the criteria used to evaluate them. It is implicit also in the games instructors play with one another; but I had little appreciation for its practical significance until the firm which has contracted to manufacture and distribute my Reader Meter gave me an estimate of the income I could expect to derive from sales and rentals over the next ten years.

The simplicity of the idea is such that I marvel it was not discovered years ago. I suspected, rightly enough as it turned out, that everything one reads leaves a detectable trace in the texture of the brain. The step from this suspicion to my working model was little more than a synthesis of common neurosurgical procedures and elementary engineering techniques. While my original machine looked like the headpiece of an old-fashioned hair dryer equipped with electrodes from a psychiatrist's shock-therapy apparatus grafted onto a set of upright coin-operated scales, the commercial version is more sophisticated. It operates by lasers instead of electrodes, and the styling has been streamlined, though the company's engineers found it difficult to improve on the design of the headpiece.

Those who wish to have their reading measured step up onto the small platform, lower the headpiece properly, and hold their breath for thirty seconds while depressing the single control button. At the end of the half-minute a bell rings and upon releasing the control button, clients receive a small card on which is printed a number that indicates how much they have read. It is a concrete embodiment of simplicity. At any time the question Who Has Read The Most? arises, those persons whose reading is in question can settle the matter by participating in a comparative measurement.

I won't bore you with an extended account of the indifference and hostility I have encountered since creating my Reader Meter, but it is instructive to discuss briefly some of the minor irritations voiced by those to whom I revealed my plans. First, there was the fear expressed by my older colleagues who saw in the device a possible lowering of their status. I reassured them with a public announcement that I would

A professor of English at South Georgia College in Douglas, Dr. H. D. Rowe is also a marathon runner.

not vulgarize my invention by installing it on every street corner. Outside the educational institutions, to which the machines will be distributed on a rental basis that was modeled on IBM policies, distribution of coin-operated models will be restricted to appropriate public buildings such as libraries, concert halls, art museums, theatres and the like. Every effort will be made to select tasteful surroundings and reach reliable clientele so as not to discredit by association the notion that the amount one has read is significant.

A confluence of my younger colleagues saw in my invention a direct threat to their continued effectiveness as teachers. Among their many fears, those having to do with the interpersonal relations of instructor and student were most sharply defined. Their greatest concern was the possibility that the better-read, more aggressive students might combine to invite them to a measure-in. Scarcely less frightening from their standpoint was the effect the Reader Meter might have on discipline and good order. How, they wanted to know, were they to control and manipulate their students unless the degree of each one's ignorance remained a matter for the teacher to determine? Finally, they were deeply concerned about what they would do during class hours if the measurement of reading were removed from their jurisdiction.

The difficulty I encountered in trying to allay these fears was attributable not so much to their being different in kind from the fears of my older colleagues, but to their much greater intensity. Confucius mentions somewhere the necessity for those who wish to get on with their work to devote a small measure of their energy to the periodical reassurance of the indolent, envious and fearful, but as I listened to this group of objectors I perceived that the fears of such people are so insatiable that they will devour whatever comforting hand is extended to them while criticising the donor for the thinness of the snack. Accordingly, whatever my personal sentiments, I finally had to leave their problem to the professional lobotomizers, as they alone are competent to deal with it.

The central value of my invention is so obvious that it requires little comment. Since the determination of each person's reading achievement is now a simple matter of inserting a coin and pushing a button, the anxiety which comes from not knowing the extent of each other's ignorance should subside; after all, can anything be more futile than persisting in worry over matters which can be determined with such great precision? Then too, intelligent discussion, judicious consideration, and perhaps even some contemplation can be substituted for the complicated games which occupy so much of our time at present. In short, my device speeds up the ordinary name-dropping facet of literary education by permitting one to drop all the names in a single flourish of the Reader Meter's official report card. More time can then be devoted to the nature, value and significance of what has been read.

Proposed Licensing Regulations for Beginning Teachers: A Position Paper

MARK GULESIAN

The Board of Education is currently in the process of revising the requirements for initial licensing of teachers. For many of us who are preoccupied with the daily concerns of the classroom, such as constructing challenging lessons, correcting compositions or finding some way to give students insight into literature, the revision of certification regulations may seem like a clash of far-off armies in the night, overshadowed by more immediate skirmishes. Yet as teachers, we have far too often left decisions which seem removed from the here and now of the classroom to others, only to find to our sorrow that it is such matters that substantially alter the warp and woof of our professional lives.

The matter of teacher certification is one of these issues. Who is certified and how the process of licensing is accomplished dictates who our colleagues will be, and how well they will perform as colleagues. Such decisions translate into what we will or will not hear through the walls of our mutual classrooms; the kinds of management problems we will have to live with in our school; the philosophy by which our English departments will live; the sort of language arts experiences our students will have had the year before or the year after they are in our classroom; how much we will be able to rely on colleagues to hold up their end of instruction. Certification procedures, in sum, affect our students, our lives, and our reputations.

The Virginia Association of Teachers of English should take a position on the proposed certification regulations. That stand should reflect the best thinking of practicing professionals in Virginia classrooms. Regulations which represent decisions about the certification of teachers which are designed to be expedient in terms of real or imaginary but in any case temporary political issues should be rejected by VATE. One mark of a profession is that the members of that profession have a strong voice in who enters it and under what conditions they become professionals.

There are two major certification changes that have been proposed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, both of which differ substantially from the regulations currently in practice as well as the new regulations endorsed by the Teacher Education Advisory Committee. The latter is appointed by the State Board of Education and represents the interests of state educators including the VEA, and has voted nearly unanimously on its own recommendations. Yet there is good reason to suppose that the State Board of Education will support the licensing

An associate professor of education at the College of William and Mary, Dr. Mark Gulesian has maintained a watchful eye on Virginia politics and education for the past decade.

procedures advocated by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction while ignoring the recommendations of its own advisory committee which represents teacher interests.

One major aspect of certification regulation involves the types of teaching licenses available to persons entering the profession. The Superintendent of Public Instruction has recommended a fundamental change in the parameters of the Provisional Certificate for individuals who wish to teach at the secondary level. Such individuals may receive the provisional certificate by completing an approved teacher education program at institutions in Virginia or in other states. These regulations are substantially unchanged from present regulations and from the current recommendations of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee. It is the following provision which is at issue: individuals may receive a two-year non-renewable Provisional Certificate if:

> *they hold a baccaleaureate degree with one or more endorsement areas and have been recommended by an employing educational agency.*

This regulation encourages the entrance into the classroom of persons who, for example, have majored in English (an endorsement area); who can get the recommendation of a school administrator; yet whose total contact with actual secondary English classrooms, students, materials, and faculties may be absolutely nil. The implication seems to be that those who teach practice no body of knowledge or skills other than that contained within the subject matter itself. Classroom management, instructional planning, design of evaluation instruments, knowledge of adolescent behavior, the ability to diagnose student needs and use special support services, and the knowledge of whether one enjoys or can even work within the framework of the secondary school, are all ignored. The proposed regulation would, in effect, invite individuals to try out a career in teaching by experimenting with colleagues and upon students for two years.

All of us who have taught, who have had student teachers, or who have had first year teachers for colleagues realize that, even with the experience of a professional course of study, the first two years are difficult. For the beginning teacher, there is often the sensation of being in the deep end of the swimming pool; there is often little formal instructional support, especially in smaller divisions where the beginner must rely on his or her colleagues to continue to develop professional skills. Given some professional preparation, which in Virginia is minimal even at present, but which includes at least a semester of student teaching, the beginning teacher has some modicum of professional competence from the first day of teaching.

Without such minimal professional experience the beginning English teacher, armed with a teaching model provided by the college lecture,

primed with thirty hours or so of literature courses, and loaded with introspective discussions with intellectual peers, must confront students who may have difficulty reading and writing and just sitting still. This is, surely, an invitation to disaster.

Perhaps those who have lit this fuse hope that these untrained colleagues will be the responsibility of the experienced teacher. It is the experienced teacher who will have to give advice on how to plan lessons; how to keep order; how to design evaluation. Who else is there to do it? There is no provision in the proposed regulations for providing payment, time, or promotion for this new professional duty. There is only an offhanded and cavalier assumption that somehow someone will take the new teacher under their wing for on-the-job training. One implication of such an approach to professional training is that teaching is not a profession at all. Surely, VATE has a responsibility to react to certification regulations which institutionalize licensing practices into an informal training program dependent upon the goodwill of overburdened colleagues and the divided interests of already busy administrators. Neither law nor medicine would tolerate such a procedure for an instant.

That those devising the regulations suspect that there is more to being an English teacher at the secondary level than can be learned by acquiring a BA in English is revealed by further certification provisions that call for new teachers who are employed under the provisional license to "demonstrate competency, through achievement in appropriate course work, in-service activities or work experience" in nine general areas including competence in the content area; organization of instruction; evaluation of student performance; recognition of individual differences; cultural awareness; understanding the nature of youth; classroom management; educational policies and procedures; governance.

These competencies must be satisfied in the first two years of teaching, and they may be satisfied in various ways including credit or non-credit in-service courses. Within the first two years the Department of Education, in cooperation with the teacher's employer, will examine the employee by means of a "team including, but not limited to, a peer, an administrator, and an individual who is designated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction."

The implications of these two regulations taken together are alarming. Quite simply, untrained personnel are invited to try their hand at teaching for two years, experimenting in actual classrooms without any provision for systematic supervision, while at the same time they are expected to take courses, after hours, to learn what they should already know. Certainly VATE has some responsibility to speak to certification regulations which would impose upon beginning teachers, in addition to a full class load, the extra responsibilities of taking courses on how to be a professional in the afternoon and evenings, as well as correcting papers, sponsoring extra-curricular activities, and making instructional plans. Surely VATE has a duty to react to certification regulations which

propose to pass on to students the heavy burden of beginning teachers who must now learn the tools and skills of their profession *in situ*, supervised only casually or not at all. What of, for example, the students of those beginning teachers who prove after the passage of two years to be incompetent? What recompense will they be given for the wasted instructional hours? Will their colleagues be expected to compensate in their instruction for the skills and concepts not learned and for the behavior problems created by frustration with poor teaching?

It is an interesting question as to why those charged with the responsibility for the instruction of Virginia's secondary school students would propose encouraging untrained teachers to seek employment and then inflict upon their colleagues and their students the burden of on-the-job training. Perhaps it is a convenient response to economic pressures; perhaps it is an act necessary to political survival; perhaps it simply reflects the distance from the realities of teaching of those responsible for licensing regulations.

However dark the view through the glass in Richmond, it is ultimately those of us who are practicing professionals who must speak out and define the parameters by which we exist as professionals. There is no issue more important, and few as important, as the issue of who shall be our colleagues and how they shall become our colleagues. Our profession is represented by the Teacher Education Advisory Committee. VATE should go on record as supporting their version of the new certification regulations on the grounds that those proposed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction are unprofessional.

REVIEWS

Stephen N. Judy. *The ABCs of Literacy: A Guide for Parents and Educators.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Stephen N. Judy and Susan J. Judy. *The English Teacher's Handbook.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979.

ELLEN T. GRIFFIN

It would be difficult to read a work by Stephen Judy without being ignited by his enthusiasm, tickled by his humor, touched by his insight into the minds of both teachers and students, and made aware of his humanistic philosophy of education. In short, he is a teacher's teacher, and *The ABCs of Literacy* and *The English Teacher's Handbook* are no exception to the remarkable Judy style.

Whereas the *Handbook* is a practical guide aimed specifically at teachers of English, the intended audience of the newer and more theoretical *ABCs of Literacy* is of a greater scope. It includes parents, community members, administrators, and teachers of all school subjects. Judy states what English teachers have long lamented: the dimensions of language instruction are so vast and crucial in today's world that neither the English teacher or the schools alone can be responsible for them. The community must help in the literary education of its children.

Judy bases *The ABCs of Literacy* on four premises:

- Literacy instruction cannot be improved without a major overhaul of both its aims and methods and a drastic alteration of teaching conditions.
- The time is right for a dramatic change in instruction.
- The change must begin with individual teachers and local schools.
- Teaching of literacy must become an interdisciplinary effort.

After discussing what the term "literacy" actually means in today's world, Judy adopts Robert Hillerich's definition as a point of reference for his book:

> *Literacy is that demonstrated competence in communication skills which enables the individual to function, appropriate to his age, independently of his society and with a potential for movement in society.*

The first half of *The ABCs* offers a theoretical explanation of learning and teaching language development. Using an historical overview of language instruction, Judy shows that a return to the "basics" would be counter-productive in today's modern world. He cites many documented examples that clearly indicate that the "good old days" of reading and writing never existed. Drill work and dry composition were ineffective centuries ago and are even more useless in today's complex society where children need even more language skills than ever before.

Judy criticizes "accountability" advocates whose obsession with minimums, standards, norms, and testing fails to help each child extend his or her language use to its full potential. He also discusses the problems of standardized testing and the misuse of test scores.

In the second half of *The ABCs,* Judy develops his plan for extending literacy instruction throughout the school, home, and community. He offers pages of practical suggestions for school boards and administrators, parents and

Ellen T. Griffin is a teacher of English and journalism at Tuckahoe Middle School in Henrico County, and she writes that she is "quite a fan" of Stephen Judy.

community members, English teachers and librarians, and teachers of other subjects including the sciences and humanities. He suggests sources for further reading and exploration into literacy education.

English teachers will find *The English Teacher's Handbook* an excellent companion piece to Judy's major work, *The ABCs of Literacy*. It was written with the help of his wife, Susan. The hundreds of "classroom" tested teaching ideas included in *The Handbook* touch every facet of the English curriculum and are sound suggestions for developing literacy. As always, Judy recognizes the many demands on the English teacher, and with his co-author, he offers *The Handbook* as a collection of ideas which the individual teacher can adapt to supplement lessons and course planning. A major premise of the book is that communication skills are learned by doing, and the concepts proposed within place the student at the center of the learning process.

The book is divided into three parts: curriculum planning and course design; ideas for teaching English; and a valuable resource section which includes sources for free or inexpensive materials for the classroom. Judy and Judy do not limit resource materials to those offered in the last section but cite references for more in-depth study of teaching ideas and techniques throughout the entire work. Of particular interest are the suggestions for using T.V. programming to encourage thought processes through analysis of characters and story patterns and discussion of television's effects on today's world.

Both *The English Teacher's Handbook* and *The ABCs of Literacy* are books every English teacher should own: in addition, *The ABCs* should be read by every parent and educator. Teachers of all subjects have long been aware that language use begins at home and is encouraged either to flower or lie fallow there.

It's past time for members of our society to accept some responsibility for the literacy education of our children.

Ken Macrorie, *Searching Writing*. Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Co., Inc., 1980.

RICHARD LEBOVITZ

Though my shelves are lined with books about the teaching of English, few have been as valuable to me as Ken Macrorie's. To my copies of *Uptaught* (Hayden, 1970), *A Vulnerable Teacher* (Hayden, 1974), *Writing to Be Read* (Hayden, 1976), and *Telling Writing*, 3rd ed. (Hayden, 1980), I have recently added a copy of Macrorie's new book, *Searching Writing*. *Searching Writing* offers an attractive alternative to the traditional research paper, which Macrorie believes has become "an exercise in badly done bibliography, often an introduction to the art of plagiarism, and a triumph of meaninglessness—for both writer and reader." His answer is the I-Search Paper, because these papers "tell stories of quests that counted for the questers and they're written in a way that catches and holds readers."

Writers of I-Search Papers do not begin with a list of prescribed topics but with subjects they have chosen and are interested in exploring. Typical I-Search Papers will then explain what writers knew or did not know about the topic, why they were writing the paper, what was involved in the search, and what they learned or did not learn. Furthermore, writers do not go immediately to the library to read, digest, and regurgitate second-hand information but seek out people knowledgeable about the subject. "The worst place to begin your search," says Macrorie, "is at the card catalog in the library. Go to people.

Richard Lebovitz lives and teaches in Buxton, North Carolina.

They're alive this year, up to date—and the books listed in the file drawers aren't. . . . If you speak with experts on your subject, you'll usually find that they are also experts on the literature of the field."

When writers turn to second-hand sources, they do so with an understanding of their usefulness and their limitations gained from Macrorie's fascinating exploration of the evolution of some of our most important bibliographic tools, like *The Encyclopaedia Britannica, The Oxford English Dictionary, The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,* and the dictionaries of Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster.

Though *Searching Writing* abounds with helpful advice for teachers and students, I found especially insightful Macrorie's criticism of pure exposition: "It ordinarily takes up less time and space than story, but often at the sacrifice of context, which supplies so much meaning. . . . Observers who scorn story as a means of reporting may be preventing themselves from understanding in context the things they're observing, and reducing the chance that their readers or listeners will see what is going on." A magazine article I recently read about the failure of voluntary soil conservation programs illustrates Macrorie's point. The writer could have stated his thesis in the introductory paragraph and developed it from there, parading figures and generalities before the reader. Instead, he presented himself standing on a bridge somewhere in the Midwest describing the extent of the erosion he saw on either side of him. Context puts the reader there and makes a believer out of him. Macrorie would say, "Tell it as a story."

Searching Writing contains sections on writing for truths, I-Searching, editing, and exploring written sources. Though recommended for college students, it could easily be tailored for use in the high school. Like Macrorie's other books, it is filled with examples of student writings that serve as models and demonstrate that his approach will indeed produce "good works."

"Dynamics of Writing:" A Special Issue of *Visible Language*

WARREN SELF

Since 1967, *Visible Language*, a journal with no formal organizational affiliation, has focused on "research and ideas that help define the unique role and properties of written language." This issue (XIV, 4, 1980) contains seven articles that explore the nature of the writing process, the teaching of the writing process, and numerous constraints in writers' environments and in writing tasks that affect the writing process. With the current emphasis on teaching the writing process, composition teachers will find this issue of *Visible Language* informative and stimulating.

The lead article, "Arts, Crafts, Gifts, and Knacks: Some Disharmonies in the New Rhetoric," is Richard E. Young's insightful classification of advocates of teaching the composing process. On the one hand, Young finds the "new romantics" suggesting that the composing process is a mystery and that teachers must remain content to accept its enigmatical nature. Writing teachers provide only an atmosphere conducive to creativity. Advocates of this position like James Miller and William Coles claim that teachers can only nurture art; they cannot directly teach writing—an art. On the other hand, Young finds the "new classicists" suggesting that teachers can teach art and that they can give writers knowledge of strategies that will allow them to produce "preconceived results by conscious, directed action" (p. 344). These teachers, who are pedagogical descendents of Aristotle, believe that the creative process—as complex as it may seem—can be analyzed, described, taught, and duplicated. Teaching heuristic procedures to writers, this group, Young believes, will have the greater impact in the classroom. Richard Weaver, Edward Corbett, Ross Winterowd, Francis Christensen, Alton Becker, Kenneth Pike, and Richard Young are among the new classicists.

Peter C. Wason, the editor of this special edition, contributed "Conformity and Commitment in Writing." Concerned that the writer's voice is disappearing from modern writing and from academic writing in particular, he finds attempts to sound impressive and scientific often result in incomprehensible prose that hides a lack of substance from both the writer and the reader. Pointing out that "any kind of serious writing involves a confrontation with the self because it creates an object which is both a part of the self and a part of the world of ideas" (p. 357), Wason urges writers to free themselves from their own stereotyped images of what they think their audiences or peers expect them to write, to commit themselves to saying just what they think, and to write and re-write so their own voices become part of the message.

David Galbraith's "The Effect of Conflicting Goals on Writing: A Case Study" describes a doctoral student who could not write a successful dissertation because she kept structuring her writing problem in terms of what she perceived to be the demands and needs of her advisors and the academic community. Galbraith called this the "institutional conception" of the writing task. Laboring under this delineation of her writing problem, the student lost sight of the need to express her own ideas. As Galbraith worked with this student, he had her write about the subject of her dissertation as if she were telling a story. Eventually she created a "private conception" of the subject matter and of the writing task. Writing in this manner became a way of

Dr. Warren Self, editor of the Needle's Eye, *teaches English at Radford University and, in the summer, is a director of the Southwest Virginia Writing Project.*

learning for the student, and "she discovered (or created) structure in her thought where none was originally apparent" (p. 374).

The other articles in this issue of *Visible Language* are equally intellectually and pedagogically stimulating. Richard Stack's "Writing as Conversation" argues in a thought-provoking manner for the idea that "fluency, not correctness, is the crucial mark of the good writer" (p. 376), and Stack suggests that one way to help students achieve fluency in writing is to engage them in more conversation and verbal play. David Lowenthal in "Mixing Levels of Revision" recounts his discovery that the tidy, linear revision strategies he had used for short essays did not work when he wrote books or monographs. Forced to find new revision strategies for the longer works, he learned that irregularities in his revision process were not a hindrance but a benefit. The larger scope of a book or monograph forced him to become recursive in his revising in that when he wrote or revised one part, he would necessarily have to re-see other parts. Through this untidy process of having to adjust several parts to fit a newly written or revised part, Lowenthal learned that his writing acquired a "continuously creative nature" (p. 385). In "Writing as Problem Solving," John R. Hayes and Linda Flower examine the research they have been conducting into the writing process and offer models of various stages of the composing process. In a related essay, "Writing as Cognitive Activity," Robert J. Bracewell compares "what we know about writing as a skill with what we know about other mental skills such as problem solving, reading, and speaking" (p. 400).

If other issues of *Visible Language* are as thorough, scholarly, and well-written as this one was, it is a journal that English teachers ought to read and subscribe to. This particular issue of *Visible Language* is available as a back issue for $3.00; subscriptions to *Visible Language* cost $15.00 per year for individuals. Subscriptions should be sent to: Merald E. Wrolstad, Editor, *Visible Language*, P. O. Box 1972, c/o The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH 44106. Scheduled topics for volume XV are: "Spatial Arrangement of Text," "Visual Cues in Word Recognition," "The Symbolism of Mathematics," and "Near Eastern Writing."

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Reading Newspapers/ Logical Communication

ZENOBIA VERNER

On streets, on television, or in movies we've all heard the newsboy's cry, "Read all about it!" Now Virginia teachers are going beyond that as they encourage their students to "Tell all about it!" or "Write all about it."

For example, Joy H. Bolte's seniors at Dinwiddie County Senior High School wrote to newspapers all over the country for specific issues, and they compared those they received with their local paper. Ms. Bolte reports that the activity proved useful to her students in writing business letters and in using comparison and contrast in writing.

Katherine Greer of C. H. Friend Elementary School in South Boston used comic strips to teach the use of quotation marks in writing dialogue. She reported that students who had not previously grasped the concept of quotation marks discovered that each speaker had a balloon surrounding their words and that in writing dialogue in a story we use quotation marks before and after to replace the balloon. She stated that, to some students, this revelation was like being struck by lightning.

Judy Whitlow of E. A. Gibson Middle School, Danville, uses newspapers to assist students in building vocabulary. Diana Winston uses newspapers in in-school suspension at George H. Moody Middle School in Richmond; the human interest and brevity of news stories made them particularly appealing to her students. Finally, Gloria Beamer of Creive Junior High School uses newspapers once or twice every two weeks to improve reading skills. She reports that students who wrote shortened versions of news atricles improved reading comprehensive skills.

Most of us like to talk about what we read in the current day's newspaper, and active involvement in realistic reading situations insures progress in all language skills. Structured newspaper activities such as those used by Virginia teachers provide opportunity for students to read, talk, and write— a natural integration of the language arts. The following suggestions are for use in structuring newspaper activities for the classroom.

Locating main ideas. Middle and secondary school students can look at today's newspaper and read several articles to determine whether the headline reflects the main idea, or if it is just designed to attract attention. Students can rewrite attention-getting headlines to reflect main iedas, then discuss their findings with the class or in pairs or small groups.

Lower ability students can work in pairs with each other, cutting headlines from articles for their partner to read and match. They can talk about clues that helped them to match articles and headlines and why they think the writer chose that headline. As an alternative, they might cut and match captions with pictures. Also, they could think of several other captions and write the best one.

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Forming sensory impressions. Students can look through the newspaper to find an article, cartoon, comic strip, or ad that has to do with something they can smell, taste, hear, see, or feel. Each student can then write one or more sentences to convince a small group of students that they actually know what the writer is trying to communicate.

Identifying characterization. Students can read letters to the editor and react to what they read. They can tell other students in a small group how they feel about the writers and speculate about why they feel that way. They can follow up by writing their own letters to the editor or by assuming roles of selected characters from literature and writing letters to the editor from the characters they select.

Identifying sequence. Students may not be able to extract sequence as they read. An interesting way to help them, and one which they enjoy, is to get them involved in making flow charts of what they read. Most newspapers have recipes or "How to" articles at least one day per week. Students might each choose a recipe, prepare a flow chart for making that dish, and share what they have done in small groups. Another day they might choose a "How to" article to place on a flow chart. They can work separately, then interact in small groups to work out differences, calling on the teacher only when they have difficulty in resolving differences.

More advanced students can read a news story or feature article and determine sequence through such time words as *first, finally, last week* or *month,* days of week or month, *time* of day or, second *quarter* or *inning* or *round.*

As an alternative, students can cut up an article which has a definite sequence, number the parts in order on the back, and ask a partner to put it in correct order.

After they have identified sequence through preparing flow charts of selected newspaper material, students can begin a sequential paper by first preparing a flow chart and then writing the paper. They can work together to check their handling of sequence and do necessary rewriting before papers and flow charts are turned in to the teacher or shared with the class.

In addition to the four reading comprehension skills suggested here, teachers can design newspaper lessons to develop other reading skills such as predicting outcomes, classifying information, identifying tone and mood, and answering a simple question. In addition, they can move directly from reading situations to related writing skills.

A word of caution: many times students (and parents, too) think that if they are reading the newspaper they are not involved in a serious learning situation, for the content of the reading may not be what they perceive the curriculum should contain. It is necessary, therefore, to comunicate goals to students. Let them know which educational goals or objectives they are working on, and let them know in such a way that they can communicate to their parents. In these days when we

have parents wanting us to go "back to the basics," it is essential that parents understand that students are developing basic reading skills which they can use in reading textbooks and other important materials throughout life. Otherwise students—and parents—are likely to jump to the conclusion that we are teaching frivolous material of questionable content.